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AMENITIES OF LITERATURE,

CONSISTING OF

SKETCHES AND CHARACTERS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BY ISAAC DISRAELI.

A New Edition,

EDITED BY HIS SON,

THE RIGHT HON. B. DISRAELI,

CHANCELLOR OF HER MAJESTY'S EXCHEQUER.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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AMENITIES OF LITERATURE.

PUBLIC OPINION.

How long has existed that numerous voice which we designate as "Public Opinion;" which I shall neither define nor describe?

The history of the English "people," considered in their political capacity, cannot be held to be of ancient date. The civil wars of England, and the intestine discords of the bloody Roses, seem to have nearly reduced the nation to a semi-barbarous condition: disputed successions, cruel factions, and family feuds, had long convulsed the land; and the political disorganization had been as eventful as were, not long after, the religious dissensions.

The grandfather of Elizabeth, Henry the Seventh, had terminated a political crisis. It was his policy to weaken the personal influence of the higher nobility, whose domination our monarchs had often fatally experienced. This seems to have been the sole "public" concern of this prudential and passionless sovereign, who, as the authority of the potent aristocracy declined, established that despotic regality which remained as the inheritance of the dynasty of the Tudors.

In the days of the queen's father, all "public interests" were concentrated in the court-circle and its dependencies.

The Parliament was but the formal echo of the voice which came from the cabinet. The learned Spelman has recorded, that, when the Lower House hesitated to pass the bill for the dissolution of the monasteries, they were summoned into the king's presence; and, the Commons being first kept in waiting some hours in his gallery, the king entered, looking angrily on one side, and then on the other: the dark scowl of the magnificent despot announced his thoughts; and they listened to the thunder of his voice. "I hear," said he, "that my bill will not pass; but I will have it pass, or I will have some of your heads."* I do not recollect whether it was on this occasion that his majesty saluted his faithful Commons as "brutes!" but the burly tyrant treated them as such. The penalty of their debates was to be their heads: therefore this important bill passed *nemine contradicente!*

However contemptuously this monarch regarded those who were within his circle, he was sufficiently enlightened in the great national revolution he meditated to desire to gain over the multitude on his side. The very circumstance of the king allowing, as the letters-patent run, "the free and liberal use of the Bible in *our own natural English tongue*, was a *coup d'état*, and an evidence that Henry at one time designed to create a people of readers on whom he counted to side with him. The people were already possessed of the Reformation before Henry the Eighth had renounced the papacy. The reformers abroad had diligently supplied them with versions of the Scriptures, and no small numbers of pamphlets printed abroad in English were dispersed among the early "gospellers," the expressive distinction of the new heretics, — a humble but fervent rabble of tailors, joiners, weavers, and other handicraftsmen, who left "the new for the old God," ready martyrs against the gross papistical impostures; and many females theological, who turned away from the corporal

* Spelman's "History of Sacrilege."

presence, and whom no bishop could seduce to courtesy to a saint.

The new concession made to this people was indeed received with enthusiasm. All flocked to read, or to be read to. Never were the Scriptures so artlessly scrutinized: they furnished whole scenes for interludes, and were tagged with rhymes for ballads. Even the grave judges, before they delivered their charges, prefaced them by a text. Each reader became an expounder, and new schismatics were busied with new heresies. The king had not calculated on this result; and when he found the nation abounded not with readers so much as with disputants, that controversies raged where uniformity was expected, Henry became so irritated at the universal distraction of opinion, that his first attempt to raise a public voice ended, as has been since often attempted, in its suppression. The permission to read the sacred volume was contracted by the most qualifying clauses. The noble and the gentry might read it "alone in their garden or orchard, or other retired places;" but men and women in the lower ranks were absolutely forbidden to read it, or to have it read to them.*

The clashing polemics of the brother and the sister of Elizabeth did not advance the progress of civil society. The novelists, if we may so term these lovers of novelty, flushed with innovation, were raging with every rapid change; while the ancients, in spite and in despondence, sullenly clung to the old, which they held could never be the obsolete. The first movements of the great reform seemed only to have transferred the late civil wars which had distracted the land to the minds of the people in a civil war of opinions.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne, there was yet no recognized "public" in the commonwealth: the people were mere fractional and incoherent parts of society. This heroic

* 34 Henry VIII.

queen, whose position and whose masculine character bear some affinity to those of the great Catharine of Russia, had to create "a people" subservient to the very design of advancing the regal authority in its ascendency. The policy of the maiden queen was that of her ancestors; but the same jealousy of the aristocracy turned her genius to a new source of influence, unknown to her progenitors, and which her successors afterwards hardly recognized. In the awful mutations through which society had been passing, some had been silently favorable to the queen's views. The population had considerably risen since the reign of Henry the Seventh.* Property had changed hands, and taken new directions; and independent classes in society were rising fast.

The great barons formerly had kept open houses for all comers and goers: five hundred or a thousand "blue coats" in a single family crowded their castles or their mansions, — these were "trencher slaves" and "swash bucklers;" besides those numerous "retainers" of great lords, who, neither menial nor of the household, yet yielded their services on special occasions, for the privilege of shielding their own insolence under the ostentatious silver "badge," or the family arms, which none might strike with impunity, and escape from the hostility of the whole noble family. In the opening scene of "Romeo and Juliet," our national bard has perpetuated the insolence of the wearers with all the reality of nature, and correctness of custom. Such troops of idling partisans were only reflecting among themselves the feuds and the pride of their rival masters, — shadows of the late civil wars which still lingered in the land.†

The first blow at the independent grandeur of the nobles

* Hallam's "Constitution of England," i. 8, 4to.

† The remains of this feudal pomp and power were visible even at a later period in the succeeding reign, when we find the Earl of Nottingham, in his embassy to Spain, accompanied by a retinue of five hundred persons, and the Earl of Hertford, at Brussels, carried three hundred gentlemen.

had been struck by the grandfather of the queen: the second was the consequence of the acts of her father. The new proprietors of the recently acquired abbey-lands, and other monastic property, were not only courtiers, but their humbler dependants; many of them the commissioners who had undervalued all these manors and lordships, that they might get such "Robin Hood's pennyworths" more easily by the novelty of "begging" for them. These formed a new body of proprietors, who gradually constituted *a new gentry*, standing between the nobles and the commonalty; and from the nature of their property they became land-jobbers, letting and underletting, raising rents, enhancing the prices of commodities, enclosing the common lands, and swallowing up the small farms by large ones. There arose in consequence a great change in agricultural pursuits, no longer practised to acquire a miserable subsistence: the land was changed into a new mine of wealth; and among the wealthiest classes of English subjects were the graziers, who indeed became the founders of many families.*

The nobles found their revenues declining, as an excess of expenditure surprised them: this changeable state only raised their murmurs; for they seemed insensible to the cause. Their ancient opulence was secretly consuming itself; their troops of domestics were thinned in numbers; and a thousand families disappeared, who once seemed to have sprung out of the soil, where whole generations had flourished through the wide domains of the lord. A great change had visibly occurred in the baronial halls. The octogenarians in Elizabeth's later days complained that the country was depopulating fast; and the chimneys of the great mansions which had smoked the year round now scarcely announced "a merry Christmas."

A transition from one state of society to another will always

* "The graziers have assured me of their credit, and some of them may be trusted for a hundred thousand pounds." — *Sir J. Harrington's Prologue to the Metamorphosis of Ajax.*

be looked on suspiciously by those who may deem the results problematical; but it will be eagerly opposed by those who find the innovation unfavorable to themselves. The results of the new direction of landed property, incomprehensible to the nobles, were abhorrent to the feelings of the people. Among "the people," that is, the populace, there still survived tender reminiscences of the warmth of the abbots' kitchens; and many a wayfaring guest could tell how erst, by ringing at the monastic gate, the wants of life had been alleviated. The monks, too, had been excellent landlords, living amid their tenants; and, while the husbandmen stood at easy rents, the public markets were regularly maintained by a constant demand. In the breaking-up of the monasteries, many thousands of persons had been dispersed; and it would seem, that, among that sturdy community of vagabonds which now rose over the land, some low Latin words in their "peddler's French," as the canting language they devised is called, indicate their origin from the familiar dialect of the ejected poor scholars of the late monastic institutions.

The commotions which rose in all parts of the country during the brief reign of Edward the Sixth were instigated by the ancient owners of these lands, who conceived that they had been disinherited by the spoliators: thus weakly they avenged their irrecoverable losses. Nor did such leaders want for popular pretences among a discontented populace, who, as they imagined, were themselves sufferers in the common cause. We are informed, on the indubitable authority of the diary of the youthful Edward, that "*the* PEOPLE had conceived a wonderful hatred against GENTLEMEN whom they held as *their enemies*." The king seems distinctly to distinguish the gentry from the nobility.

In the decline of the great households, a result, however, occurred, which tended greatly to improve the independent condition of "the people." The manual arts had been practised from generation to generation, the son succeeding the

father in the wide domains of some noble; but when the great lords were contracting the scale of their establishments, and failed to furnish occupation to these dependants, the mechanics and artificers took refuge in the towns: there localized, they were taught to reap the fruits of their own daily industry; and as their labor became more highly appreciated, and the arts of commerce were more closely pursued, they considerably heightened the cost of those objects of necessity or pleasure which supplied the wants or the luxuries of the noble. In becoming citizens, they ceased to be mere domestics in the great households; a separate independence was raised between the lord and his mechanic: the humble class lost something in leaving the happy carelessness of life for a condition more anxious and precarious; but the influence of the noble was no longer that of the lord paramount, but simply the influence of the customer over the tradesman; "an influence," as Hume shrewdly remarks, "which can never be dangerous to civil government."

We now distinctly perceive new classes in civil society rising out of the decline of the preponderating power of the great barons, and of the new disposition of landed property, — the gentry, the flourishing agriculturist, and those mechanics and artificers who carried on their trades independently of their former lordly patrons: we now, therefore, discern the first elements of popularity.

There was now "a people," who might be worthy of entering into the views of the statesman; but it was a divided people. Among them, the queen knew, lay concealed her domestic enemies: a more novel religion than the new was on the watch to shake her established church; and no inconsiderable portion of her subjects in their papal consciences were traitors. The arts of juncture, or the keeping together parts broken and separated, making hearts compliant which were stubbornly opposed to each other, demanded at once the firmness and the indulgence of the wisest policy; and such

was the administration of Elizabeth. A reign of continued struggle, which extended to nearly half a century, was a probationary period for royalty; and a precarious throne, while it naturally approximated the sovereign to the people, also taught the nation its own capacities, by maintaining their monarch's glory amid her external and internal enemies.

The nobility was to feel the weight of the royal prerogative: no noble families were permitted to intermarry, and no peer could leave the kingdom, without the license of the queen. But, at the very time she was ruling them with a potent hand, Elizabeth courted the eyes and the hearts of "the people:" she sought every occasion to exhibit her person in processions and progresses, and by her speech and manner shed her graciousness on the humblest of her subjects. Not slow to perceive their wants and wishes, she it was who first gave the people a theatre, as her royal style expressed it, "for the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure;" and this at a time when her council were divided in their opinion.

Participating in the inmost feelings of the people, she commanded that the awful tomes of Fox's "Acts and Monuments" — a book written, as the author has himself expressed it, for "the simple people" — should be chained to the desk of every church and common hall. In this "Book of Martyrs," gathered from all quarters, and chronicling the obscurest individuals, many a reader, kindling over the lengthened page, dwelt on his own domestic tale in the volume of the nation. These massy volumes were placed easy of access for perpetual reference, and doubtless their earnest spirit multiplied Protestants.

No object which concerned the prosperity of the people but the queen identified herself with it: she saluted Sir Thomas Gresham as her "royal merchant;" and, opening with her presence his Exchange, she called it Royal. It is a curious evidence of her system to win over the people's loyalty, that

she suggested to Sir Thomas Wilson to transfuse the eloquence of Demosthenes into the language of the people, to prepare them by such solemn admonitions against the machinations of her most dreaded enemy. Our translator reveals the design by his title: "The Three Orations of Demosthenes, with those his fower Orations titled expressly and by name against King Philip of Macedonie, most needful to be redde in these dangerous dayes, of all them that love their countrie's libertie." * The queen considered the aptness of their application, and the singular felicity of transferring the inordinate ambition of Philip of Macedon to Philip of Spain. To these famous "philippics" was prefixed the solemn oath that the young men of Greece took to defend their country against the royal invader, "at this time right needful for all Christians, not only for Englishmen, to observe and follow."

It was not until eighteen years after that the Armada sailed from the shores of Spain, and this translation perpetuates an instance of political foresight.

The genius of Elizabeth created her age: surrounding herself by no puny favorites of an hour, in the circle of her royalty were seen the most laborious statesmen our annals record, and a generation of romantic commanders; the secretaries of state were eminently learned; and the queen was all these herself, in her tried prudence, her dauntless intrepidity, and her lettered accomplishments. The energies of the sovereign reached the people, and were responded to; the spirit-stirring events rose with the times: it was a reign of enterprise and emulation, a new era of adventure and glory. The heroes of England won many a day's battle in the Netherlands, in France, in Spain, and in Portugal; and the ships of England unfurled their flags in unknown seas, and left the glory of the maiden queen in new lands.

* Imprinted at London by Henrie Denham, quarto, without date; but the dedication to Sir William Cecil is dated 1570, — nearly twenty years after Sir Thomas Wilson's first publications "On Logic" and "On Rhetoric."

It would be no slight volume which should contain the illustrious names of a race of romantic adventurers, who lost their sleep to gain new trophies in a campaign, to settle a remote colony, or to give a name to a new continent. All ranks in society felt the impulse of the same electrical stroke; and even the cupidity of the mere trader was elevated into heroism, and gained a patent of heraldry.* The spirits of that age seemed busied with day-dreams, of discovering a new people, or founding a new kingdom. Shakspeare alludes to this passion of the times: —

> "Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;
> Some to discover islands far away."

If our Drake was considered by the Spaniard as the most terrible of pirates, in England he was admired as another Columbus. The moral feeling may sometimes be more justly regulated by the degree of latitude. The Norrises, the Veres, the Grenvilles, the Cavendishes, the Earl of Cumberland, and the Sidneys, bear a lustre in their characters which romance has not surpassed; and many there were as resolutely ambitious as Sir John Davies, who has left his name to the Straits still bearing it. Sir Henry Sidney, the father of Sir Philip, who became a distinguished statesman, had once designed to raise a new kingdom in America; and his romantic son resumed this design of founding an empire for the Sidneys. The project was secretly planned between our puerile hero and the adventurous Drake, and was only frustrated by the queen's arrest of her hero at Plymouth. Of the same batch of kingdom-founders was Sir Walter Rawleigh: he baptized

* In Sylvanus Morgan's "Sphere of Gentry," lib. iii. c. 9, is one of these patents of heraldry, granted to William Tollerson, a merchant of London, that his honors may be fitly conveyed to his offspring. He had fought and conquered in Africa; destroyed a small navy of "the Portugals," with whom he made attempt to league; and bore for his crest a demi-negro, in proper color, prepared to the conflict, with dart and pavice, gold; and a ship, sable, with all its equipage.

with the spirit of loyalty his "Virginia." Muscovy, at that stirring period, was a dominion as strange as America and the Indies. During the extraordinary events of this period, when Elizabeth had obtained a monopoly of the trade of that country, the czar proposed to marry an English lady: a British alliance, both personal and political, he imagined, should his subjects revolt, might secure an asylum in the land of his adoption. The daughter of the Earl of Huntington was actually selected by the queen to be the czarina; but her ladyship was so terrified at the Muscovite and his icy region, that she lost the honor of being a romantic empress, and the civilizer of all the Russias. Thus, wherever the winds blew, the name of Elizabeth was spread; "the great globe itself" seemed to be our "inheritance," and seemed not too vast a space to busy the imaginations of the people.

This was the time of first beginnings in the art of guiding public opinion. Ample volumes, like those of Fox, powerful organs of the feelings of the people, were given to them. The Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed opened for them the glory of the love of their fatherland. It was the genius of this active age of exploits which inspired RICHARD HAKLUYT to form one of the most remarkable collections in any language; yet it was solely to be furnished from our own records, and the mighty actors in the face of the universe were solely to be Englishmen. Now appeared the three tomes of "the Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries made by the English Nation," northward, southward, and westward, and at last "the new-found world of America;" a world, with both Indies, discovered within their own century! — these amazed and delighted all classes of society. The legendary voyages of the monkish chroniclers, their maritime expeditions, opening with the fabulous Arthur, hardly exceeded the simplicity of our first discoverers. Many a hero had led on the adventurers; but their secretaries and historians were often themselves too astonished at what they witnessed, and

staid too short a time, to recover their better judgment in new places, and among new races of men. Sanctioned by many noble and genuine adventures, not less authentic appeared their terrors and their wonder; in polar icebergs, or before that island which no ship could approach, wherein devils dwelt; or among the sunny isles of Greece, and the burning regions of Ormus and Malacca, and the far realms of Cambaya and Cathay; in Ethiopia and in Muscovy, in Persia and in Peru; on the dark coast of Guinea, and beyond in Africa; and in Virginia, with her feathered chiefs; with many a tale of Tripoli and Algiers, where Britons were found in chains, till the sovereign of England demanded their restitution; and of the Holy Land, where the peaceful crusaders now only knelt in pilgrimage. All this convinced them that the world was everywhere inhabited; and that all was veracious, as Sebastian Cabot, the true rival of Columbus, and perhaps our countryman, had marked in his laborious maps, which he had engraved, and which were often wondered at, as they hung in the Privy Gallery at Westminster. Alas for the readers of modern travels, who can no longer participate in the wild and awful sensations of the all-believing faith of "the home-bred wit" of the Elizabethan era, — the first readers of HAKLUYT's immense collection!

The advancement of general society out of its first exclusive circles became apparent when "the public" themselves were gradually forming a component part of the empire.

"The new learning," as the free discussions of opinions and the popular literature of the day were distinguished, widely spread. Society was no longer scattered in distant insulations. Their observation was more extended, their thought was more grave; tastes multiplied, and finer sympathies awakened. "The theatre" and "the ordinary" first rose in this early stage of our civilization; and the ceaseless publications of the day, in the current form of pamphlets, were snatched up, even in the intervening pauses of theatrical

representation, or were commented upon by some caustic oracle at the ordinary, or in Powles's Walk. We were now at the crisis of that great moral revolution in the intellectual history of a people, when the people become readers, and the people become writers. In the closer intercourse with their neighbors, their insulated homeliness was giving way to more exotic manners: they seemed to imitate every nation while they were incurring the raillery or the causticity of our satirists, who are not usually the profoundest philosophers. The satirists are the earliest recorders of manners; but, fugitive historians of fugitive objects, they only sport on the surface of things. The progressive expansion of social life, through its homeliest transitions, is more clearly discerned in the perspective view; for those who are occupied by opening their narrow ways, and by lengthening their streets, do not contemplate on the architectural city which is reserved for posterity.

It was popular to ridicule the finical "Monsieur Traveller," who was somewhat insolent by having "swum in a gondola;" or to raise a laugh at him who had "bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, and his bonnet in Germany." It did not occur to our immortal satirist, that the taste which had borrowed the doublet and the bonnet had also introduced to his happier notice the tales of Bandello and the "Giuletta" of Luigi Porto. The dandy of Bishop Hall almost resembles the fantastic picture of Horace, in illustrating a combination of absurdities. Hall paints with vigor: —

> "A French head joined to neck Italian;
> His thighs from Germany, his breast from Spain:
> An Englishman in none, a fool in all."

But if this egregious man of fashion borrowed the wordiness of Italian compliment, or the formality of the Spanish courtesy, he had been also taught the sonnet and the stanza, and those musical studies which now entered into the system of education, and probably gave delicacy to our emotions, and euphony

to our language. The first attempts in the refinements of manners are unavoidably vitiated by too close a copy; and it is long before that becomes graceful which began in affectation. When the people experienced a ceaseless irritability, a marvelling curiosity to learn foreign adventures and to inspect strange objects, and "laid out ten doits to see a dead Indian," these were the nascent propensities which made Europe for them a common country, and indicated that insular genius which at a distant day was to add new dominions to the British Empire.

This public opinion which this sovereign was creating she watched with solicitude, not only at home, but even abroad. No book was put forth against her government, but we find her ministers selecting immediately the most learned heads or the most able writers to furnish the replies.* Burghley, we are told, had his emissaries to inform him of the ballads sung in the streets; and a curious anecdote at the close of the reign of Elizabeth informs us how anxiously she pondered on the manifestations of her people's feelings. The party of Lord Essex, on the afternoon before their insurrection, ordered the play of the tragical abdication of Richard the Second. It is one of the charges in their trial; and we learn, from a more secret quarter than the public trial, that the queen deeply felt the acting of this play at that moment as the watchword of the rebels, expressive of their designs. The queen's fears

* When Osorio published in Latin a bitter attack on Elizabeth and the English Church, Cecil employed Walter Haddon to answer it in Latin; and January, 1563, sent Haddon's book in a despatch to France, to our ambassador there, that it might be published where Osorio's had first come out. Lord Burghley sent the book of the Jesuit Sanders, whom Fuller calls Slanders, "De Visibili Monarchia," to the Archbishop of Canterbury to get answered. The archbishop, having found the right man, writes to Lord Burghley, that "he has honested him with a room in the Arches," until he had completed the work. A libellous tract, entitled "A Discovery of Treason," in 1573, reflecting severely on Elizabeth's ministers, was immediately answered by a royal proclamation; and so was the libel on Leicester by the Jesuit Parsons, and many others.

transformed her into Richard the Second; and a single step seemed to divide her throne from her grave. The recollection of this circumstance long haunted her spirits; for, a year and a half afterwards, in a literary conversation with the antiquary Lambarde, the subject of a portrait of Richard the Second occurring, the queen exclaimed, "I am Richard the Second, know ye not that?" The antiquary, at once wary and ingenuous, replied, well knowing that the virgin queen would shrink were her well-beloved Essex to be cast among ordinary rebels, "Such a wicked imagination was attempted by a most unkind gentleman, the most adorned creature that ever your majesty made." The queen replied, "He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors." So long afterwards was the royal Elizabeth still brooding over the gloomy recollection.

In the art of government, a new principle seemed to have arisen, — that of adopting and guiding public opinion, which, in the mutations of civil and political society, had emerged as from a chaos. A vacillating and impetuous monarch could not dare it: it was the work of a thoughtful sovereign, whose sex inspired a reign of love. Elizabeth not only lived in the hearts of her people, but survived in their memories: when she was no more, her birthday was long observed as a festival day; and so prompt was the remembrance of her deeds and her words, that, when Charles the First once published his royal speech, an insidious patriot sent forth "the Speech of Queen Elizabeth," which, being innocently printed by the king's printer, brought him into trouble. Our philosophic politician, Harrington, has a remarkable observation on the administration of Elizabeth, which, laying aside his peculiar views on monarchy and his theoretical balances in the State, we may partly adopt. He says, "If the government of Elizabeth be rightly weighed, it seems rather the exercise of a principality in a commonwealth than a sovereign power in a monarchy. Certain it is that she ruled wholly with an art

she had to high perfection, by humoring and blessing her people."

Did Harrington imagine that political resembles physical science? In the revelations of the Verulamian philosophy, it was a favorite axiom with its founder, that we subdue Nature by yielding to her.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND ORTHOEPY.

Some of the first scholars of our country stepped out of the circle of their classical studies with the patriotic design of inculcating the possibility of creating a literary language. This was a generous effort in those who had already secured their supremacy by their skill and dexterity in the two languages consecrated by scholars. Many of the learned engaged in the ambitious reform of our *orthography*, then regulated by no certain laws; but, while each indulged in some scheme different from his predecessors, the language seemed only to be the more disguised amid such difficult improvements and fantastic inventions.

A curious instance of the monstrous anomalies of our orthography in the infancy of our literature, when a spelling-book was yet a precious thing which had no existence, appears in this letter of the Duchess of Norfolk to Cromwell, Earl of Essex:—

"*My ffary gode lord — her I sand you in tokyn hoff the neweyer a glasse hoff Setyl set in Sellfer gyld I pra you tak hit (in) wort An hy wer habel het showlde be bater I woll hit war wort a m crone.*"

These lines were written by one of the most accomplished ladies of the sixteenth century, "the friend of scholars and the patron of literature." Dr. Nott, who has supplied this literary curiosity, has modernized the passage word by word; and, though the idiom of the times is preserved, it no longer wears any appearance of vulgarity or of illiteracy.

"My very good lord, — Here I send you, in token of the New Year, a glass of setyll set in silver gilt: I pray you take it (in)

worth. An I were able, it should be better. I would it were worth a thousand crowns."

The domestic correspondence, as appears in letters of the times, seems to indicate that the writers imagined, that, by conferring larger dimensions on their words by the duplication of redundant consonants, they were augmenting the force, even of a monosyllable!*

In such disorder lay our orthography, that writers, however peculiar in their mode of spelling, did not even write the same words uniformly. Elizabeth herself wrote one word, which assuredly she had constantly in her mind, seven different ways; for thus has this queen written the word *sovereign*. The royal mistress of eight languages seemed at a loss which to choose for her command. The orthography of others eminent for their learning was as remarkable, and sometimes more eruditely whimsical, either in the attempt to retrace the etymology, or to modify exotic words to a native origin; or, finally, to suit the popular pronunciation. What system or method could be hoped for at a time when there prevailed a strange discrepancy in the very names of persons, so variously written not only by their friends, but by their owners? Lord Burleigh, when Secretary of State, daily signing despatches with the favorite *Leicester*, yet spelt his name *Lecester*; and Leicester himself has subscribed his own name eight different ways.†

At that period, down to a much later, every one seems to have been at a loss to write their own names. The name of *Villers* is spelt fourteen different ways in the deeds of that family. The simple dissyllabic but illustrious name of *Percy*,

* See "the Paston Letters," edited by Sir John Fenn; and Lodge's authentic and valuable Collection.

† George Chalmers's "Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare Papers," 94. — See on this subject in "Curiosities of Literature," art. "Orthography of Proper Names." [Also a note on the orthography of Shakspeare's name, in an essay on that poet, in a future page of the present volume]

the bishop found in family documents, they had contrived to write in fifteen different ways.

This unsettled state of our *orthography*, and, what it often depended on, our *orthoepy*, was an inconvenience detected even at a very early period. The learned Sir JOHN CHEKE, the most accomplished Greek scholar of the age, descended from correcting the Greek pronunciation to invent a system of English orthography. Cheke was no formal pedant: with an enlarged notion of the vernacular language, he aimed to restore the English of his day to what then he deemed to be its purity. He would allow of no words but such as were true English, or of Saxon original; admitting of no adoption of any foreign word into the English language, which at this early period our scholar deemed sufficiently copious. He objected to the English translation of the Bible, for its introduction of many foreign words; and, to prove them unnecessary, he retranslated the Gospel of St. Matthew, written on his own system of a new orthography. His ear was nice, and his Attic taste had the singular merit of giving concision to the perplexed periods of our early style. But his orthography deterred the eyes of his readers: however the learned Cheke was right in his abstract principle, it operated wrong when put in practice; for every newly-spelt word seemed to require a peculiar vocabulary.

When Secretaries of State were also men of literature, the learned Sir THOMAS SMITH, under Elizabeth, composed his treatise on "the English Commonwealth," both in Latin and in English, — the worthy companion of the great work of Fortescue. Not deterred by the fate of his friend, the learned Cheke, he projected even a bolder system, — to correct the writing of English words. He designed to relieve the ear from the clash of supernumerary consonants, and to liquefy by a vowelly confluence. But though the scholar exposed the absurdity of the general practice, where in certain words the redundant letters become mutes, or do not comprehend

the sounds which are expressed, while in other words we have no letters which can express the sounds by which they are spoken, he had only ascertained the disease; for he was not equally fortunate in the prevention. An enlargement of the alphabet, ten vowels instead of five, and a fantastical mixture of the Roman, the Greek, and the Saxon characters, required an Englishman to be a very learned man to read and write his maternal language. This project was only substituting for one difficulty another more strange.

Were we to course the wide fields which these early "rackers of orthography" have run over, we should start, at every turn, some strange "winged words;" but they would be fantastic monsters, neither birds with wings, nor hares with feet. Shakspeare sarcastically describes this numerous race: "Now he is turned ORTHOGRAPHER, his words are a very fantastical banquet; just so many strange dishes." Some may amuse. One affords a quaint definition of the combination of *orthoepy* with *orthography;* for he would teach "how to write or *paint the image of man's voice* like to the life or nature." * The most popular amender of our defective orthography was probably BULLOKAR; for his work at least was republished. He proposed a bold confusion,—to fix the fugitive sounds by recasting the whole alphabet, and enlarging its number from twenty-four to more letters, giving two sounds to one letter, to some three: at present no mark or difference shows how the sounded letters should be sounded, while our speech (or orthography) so widely differed; but the fault, says old Bullokar, is in the *picture*, that is, the letters, not the speech. His scheme would have turned the language into a sort of music-book, where the notes would have taught the tones.† I extract from his

* "An Orthographie, composed by J (ohn) H (art), Chester Herald," 1569. A book of extreme rarity. A copy at Horne Tooke's sale was sold for £6. 6s. It is in the British Museum.

† "Bullokar's Booke at large for the Amendment of Orthographie for English Speech," &c., &c., 1580, 4to; republished in 1586.

address to his country a curious passage. "In true orthographie, both the *eye*, the *voice*, and the *eare* must consent perfectly, without any let, doubt, or maze. Which want of concord in the eye, voice, and ear, I did perceive, almost thirtie yeares past, by the very voice of children, who, guided by the eye with the letter, and giving voice according to the name thereof, as they were taught to name letters, yielded the eare of the hearer a degree contrary sound to the word looked for: hereby grewe quarrels in the teacher, and lothsomeness in the learner, and great payne to both; and the conclusion was, that both teacher and learner must go by rote, or no rule could be followed, when, of 37 parts, 31 kept no square, nor true joint."

All these reformers, with many subsequent ones, only continued to disclose the uneasy state of the minds of the learned in respect to our inveterate orthography; so difficult was it, and so long did it take to teach the nation how to spell, — an art in which we have never perfectly succeeded. Even the learned Mulcaster, in his zealous labor to "the right writing of the English tongue," failed, though his principle seems one of the most obvious in simplicity. This scholar, a master of St. Paul's School, freed from collegiate prejudices, maintained that "words should be written as they were spoken." But where were we to seek for the standard of our orthoepy? Who was to furnish the model of our speech, in a land where the pronunciation varied from the court, the capital, or the county, and as mutable from age to age? The same effort was made among our neighbors. In 1570, the learned Joubert attempted to introduce a new orthography, without, however, the aid of strange characters. His rule was only to give those letters which yield the proper pronunciation: thus he wrote *œuvres*, uvres; *françoise*, fransaise; *temps*, tems.

Among the early reformers of our vernacular idiom, the name of RICHARD MULCASTER has hardly reached posterity. Our philologer has dignified a small volume, ostensibly com-

posed for "the training of children,"* by the elevated view he opened of far-distant times from his own of our vernacular literature; and he had the glory of having made this noble discovery when our literature was yet in its infancy.

This learned master of St. Paul's School develops the historical progress of language, on the great philosophical principle that no impediment existed to prevent the modern from rivalling the more perfect ancient languages. In opposition to the many, who contended that no subject can be philosophically treated in the maternal English, he maintained that no one language, naturally, is more refined than another, but is made so by the industry of "eloquent speech" in the writers themselves, and by the excellence of the matter: a native soil becomes more genial in emulating a foreign. I preserve the pleasing illustration of his argument in the purity of his own prose, and because he was the prophet of our literature.

"The people of Athens thus beautified their speech and enriched their tongue with all kinds of knowledge, both bred within Greece and borrowed from without. The people of Rome, having plotted [planned] their government much like the Athenians, became enamoured of their eloquence, and translated their learning wherewith they were in love. The Roman authority first planted the Latin among us here by force of their conquest: the use thereof for matters of learning doth cause it continue, though the conquest be expired. And therefore the learned tongues, so termed of their store, may thank their own people both for their fining [refinement] at home and their favor abroad. But did not these tongues use even the same means to brave [adorn] themselves, ere they proved so beautiful?

"There be two special considerations which keep the Latin and other learned tongues, though chiefly the Latin, in great countenance among us: the one is the knowledge which is

* "The first part of the Elementarie, which entreateth chieflie of the *right writing of our English Tong*," 1582, 12mo.

registered in them; the other is the conference which the learned of Europe do commonly use by them, both in speaking and writing. We seek them for profit, and keep them for that conference; but whatever else may be done in our tongue, either to serve private use or the beautifying our speech, I do not see but it may well be admitted, *even though in the end it displaced the Latin*, as the Latin did others, and furnished itself by the Latin learning. For is it not indeed a marvellous bondage to become servants to one tongue, for learning sake, the most of our time, with loss of most time, whereas we may have the very same treasure in our own tongue, with the gain of most time? — our own bearing the joyful title of our liberty and freedom, the Latin tongue remembering us of our thraldom. I honor the Latin; but I worship the English. I wish all were in ours which they had from others; and, by their own precedent, do let us understand how boldly we may venture, notwithstanding the opinion of some of our people, as desire rather to please themselves with a foreign tongue wherewith they are acquainted, than to profit their country in her natural language, where their acquaintance should be. The tongues which we study were not the first getters, though by learned travel [labor] they prove good keepers; but they are ready to return and discharge their trust when it shall be demanded, in such a sort, as it was committed for term of years, and not for inheritance."

"But it is objected," our learned Mulcaster proceeds, with his engaging simplicity, that "the English tongue is of small reach, stretching no further than this island of ours; nay, not there over all. What tho' [then]? It reigneth there, though it go not beyond sea. And be not English folk finish [refined] as well as the foreign, I pray you? And why not our tongue for speaking, and our pen for writing, as well as our bodies for apparel, and our tastes for diet? But you say that we have no cunning [knowledge] proper to our soil to

cause foreigners to study it, as a treasure of such store. What tho' [then]? Why raise not the English wits, if they will bend their wills either, for matter or for method, in their own tongue, TO BE IN TIME AS WELL SOUGHT TO BY FOREIGN STUDENTS FOR INCREASE OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE, AS OUR SOIL IS SOUGHT TO AT THIS TIME BY FOREIGN MERCHANTS FOR INCREASE OF THEIR WEALTH?"*

We, who have lived to verify the prediction, should not less esteem the prophet: the pedagogue, MULCASTER, is a philosopher addressing men,—a genius who awakens a nation. His indeed was that "prophetic eye," which, amid the rudeness of its own days, in its clear vision contemplated on the futurity of the English language; and the day has arrived, when "*in the end it displaced the Latin*," and "FOREIGN STUDENTS" learn our language "FOR INCREASE OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE."

The design of Mulcaster to regulate orthography by orthoepy was revived so late as in 1701, in a curious work, under the title of "Practical Phonography," by John Jones, M.D. He proposed to write words as they are "fashionably" sounded. He notices "the constant complaints which were then rife in consequence of an unsettled orthography." He proclaims war against "the visible letters," which, not sounded, occasion a faulty pronunciation. I suspect we had not any spelling-books in 1701. I have seen Dyche's of 1710; but I do not recollect whether this was the first edition: this sage of practical orthography was compelled to submit to custom, and taught his scholars to read by the *ear*, and not by the *eye*. "Yet custom," he adds, "is not the truest way of speaking and writing, from not regarding the originals whence words are derived: hence abundance of errors have crept

* In this copious extract from Mulcaster's little volume, we have a specimen of the unadulterated simplicity of the English language. I have only modernized the orthography for the convenience of the reader; but I have not altered a single word.

both into the pronunciation and writing, and English is grown a medley in both these respects." Such was the lamentation of an honest pedagogue in 1710.

The "Phonography" of Dr. Jones was probably well received; for three years after, in 1704, he returned to his "spelling," which, he observed, "however mean, concerned the benefit of millions of persons." He had a notion to "invent a universal language to excel all others, if he thought that people would be induced to use it." *

Even the learned of our own times have indulged some of these philological reveries. One would hardly have suspected that Dr. FRANKLIN, whose genius was so wholly practical, contemplated to revolutionize the English alphabet: words were to be spelt by the sounds of their letters, which were to be regulated by six new characters, and certain changes in the vowels. He seems to have revived old Bullokar. PINKERTON has left us a ludicrous scheme of what he calls "an improved language." Our vowel terminations amount but to one-fourth of the language: all substantives closing in hard consonants were to have a final vowel, and the consonant was

* The second work of our phonographer is entitled "the New Art of Spelling, designed chiefly for Persons of Maturity; teaching them to Spell and Write Words by the Sound thereof, and to Sound and Read Words by the Sight thereof,—rightly, neatly, and fashionably, &c.," by J. Jones, M.D., 1704.

I give a specimen of his words as they are written and as they are pronounced:—

VISIBLE LETTERS.	CUSTOMARY AND FASHIONABLY.
Mayor	Mair
Worcester	Wooster
Dictionary	Dixnary
Bought	Baut.

"All words," he observes, "were originally written as sounded, and all which have since altered their sounds did it for ease and pleasure's sake from—

the harder to the easier
the harsher to the pleasanter } sound."
the longer to the shorter

to be omitted after the vowel. We were to acquire the Italian euphony by this presumed melody for our harsh terminations. In this disfigurement of the language, a *quack* would be a *quaco*, and *that* would be *tha*. Plurals were to terminate in *a*; *pens* would be *pena*; papers, *papera*. He has very innocently printed the entire "Vision of Mirza," from the "Spectator," on his own system: the ludicrous jargon at once annihilates itself. Not many years ago, JAMES ELPHINSTONE, a scholar, and a very injudicious one, performed an extraordinary experiment. He ventured to publish some volumes of a literary correspondence, on the plan of writing the words as they are pronounced. But this editor, being a Scotchman, had two sorts of Scotticisms to encounter, — in idiom and in sound. Notwithstanding the agreeable subjects of a literary correspondence, it is not probable that any one ever conquered a single perusal of pages, which tortured the eye, if they did not the understanding.

We may smile at these repeated attempts of the learned English, in their inventions of alphabets, to establish the correspondence of pronunciation with orthography, and at their vowelly conceits to melodize our orthoepy. All these, however, demonstrate that our language has never been written as it ought to have been. All our writers have experienced this inconvenience. Considerable changes in spelling were introduced at various periods, by way of experiment: this liberty was used by the Elizabethan writers for an improvement on the orthography of Gower and Chaucer. Since the days of Anne, we have further deviated; yet, after all our efforts, we are constrained to read words not as they are written, and to write different words with the same letters, which leaves them ambiguous. And, now, no reform shall ever happen, short of one by "the omnipotence of Parliament," which, the great luminary of law is pleased to affirm, "can do any thing except making a man a woman." Customary errors are more tolerable than the perplexing innovations of the

most perverse ingenuity.* The eye, bewildered in such uncouth pages as are here recorded, found the most capricious orthography in popular use always less perplexing than the attempt to write words according to their pronunciation, which every one regulated by the sounds familiar to his own ear, and usually to his own county. Even the dismemberment of words, omitting or changing letters, distracts attention;† and modern readers have often been deterred from the study of our early writers by their unsettled orthography. Our later literary antiquaries have, therefore, with equal taste and sagacity, modernized their text, by printing the words as the writers, were they now living, would have transcribed them.

Such have been the impracticable efforts to paint the voice to the eye, or to chain by syllables airy sounds. The imperfections for which such reforms were designed in great part still perplex us. Our written language still remains to the utter confusion of the eye and the ear of the baffled foreigner, who often discovers that what is written is not spoken, and what is spoken is not written. The orthography of some

* The Grammar prefixed to Johnson's Dictionary, curiously illustrated by the notes and researches of modern editors, will furnish specimens of many of these abortive attempts.

† When we began to drop the letter *k* in such words as *physic*, *music*, *public*, a literary antiquary, who wrote about 1790, observed on this new fashion, that, "forty years ago, no schoolboy had dared to have done this with impunity." These words in older English had even another superfluous letter; being spelt *physicke*, *musicke*, *publicke*. The modern mode, notwithstanding its prevalence, must be considered anomalous; for other words ending with the consonants *ck* have not been shorn of their final *k*. We do not write *attac*, *ransac*, *bedec*, nor *bulloc*, nor *duc*, nor good *luc*.

The appearance of words deprived of their final letter, though identically the same in point of sound, produces a painful effect on the reader. Pegge furnishes a ludicrous instance. It consists of monosyllables, in which the final and redundant *k* is not written: "*Dic* gave *Jac* a *kic*, when *Jac* gave *Dic* a *knoc* on the *bac* with a *thic stic*." If even such familiar words and simple monosyllables can distract our attention, though they have only lost a single and mute letter, how greatly more in words compounded, disguised by the mutilation of several letters!

words leads to their false pronunciation. Hence originated that peculiar invention of our own, that odd-looking monster in philology, "a pronouncing dictionary," which offends our eyes by this unhappy attempt to write down sounds. They whose eyes have run over Sheridan, Walker, and other orthoepists, must often have smiled at their arbitrary disfigurements of the English language. These ludicrous attempts are, after all, inefficient; while they compel us to recollect, if the thing indeed be possible, a polysyllabic combination as barbarous as the language of the Cherokees.*

We may sympathize with the disconcerted foreigner who is a learner of the English language. All words ending in *ugh* must confound him: for instance, *though*, *through*, and *enough*, alike written, are each differently pronounced; and, should he give us *bough* rightly, he may be forgiven should he blunder at *cough:* if he escape in safety from *though*, the same wind will blow him out of *thought*. What can the foreigner hope when he discovers that good judges of their language pronounce words differently? A mere English scholar who holds little intercourse with society, however familiar in his closet be his acquaintance with the words, and even their derivations, might fail in a material point, when using them in conversation or in a public speech. A list of names of places and of persons might be given, in which not a single syllable is pronounced of those that stand written.

That a language should be written as it is spoken we see has been considered desirable by the most intelligent scholars. Some have laudably persevered in writing the past tense *red*, as a distinction from the present *read*, and anciently I have found it printed *redde*. Lord Byron has even retained the

* A most serious attempt was made a few years ago to establish English spelling by sound. A journal called the *Fonetic Nuz* (*sic*, to give the idea of the pronunciation of the word *News*) was published, and Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield" printed with a type expressly cast for the novel forms. The ruin of the projector closed the experiment. — Ed.

ancient mode in his Diary. By not distinguishing the tenses, an audible reader has often unwarily confused the times. *G* before *i*, ungrammatical orthoepists declare, is sounded hard; but so numerous are the exceptions, that the exceptions might equally be adopted for the rule. It is true that the pedantry of scholarship has put its sovereign veto against the practice of writing words as they are spoken, even could the orthoepy ever have been settled by an unquestioned standard. When it was proposed to omit the mute *b* in *doubt* and *debt*, it was objected, that, by this castration of a superfluous letter in the pronunciation, we should lose sight of their Latin original. The same circumstance occurred in the reform of the French orthography: it was objected to the innovators, that when they wrote *tems*, rejecting the *p* in *temps*, they wholly lost sight of the Latin original, *tempus*. Milton seems to have laid down certain principles of orthography, anxiously observed in his own editions printed when the poet was blind. An orthography which would be more natural to an unlearned reader is rejected by the etymologist, whose pride and pomp exult in tracing the legitimacy of words to their primitives, and delight to write them as near as may be according to the analogy of languages.

THE ANCIENT METRES IN MODERN VERSE.

A STRONG predilection to reproduce the ancient metres in their vernacular poetry was prevalent among the scholars of Europe; but, what is not less remarkable, the attempt everywhere terminated in the same utter rejection by the popular ear. What occasioned this general propensity of the learned, and this general antipathy in the unlearned?

These repeated attempts to restore the metrical system of the Greeks and the Romans would not only afford a classical ear, long exercised in the nice artifices of the ancient prosody, — a gratification entirely denied to the uninitiated; but, at bottom, there was a deeper design, — that of elevating an art which the scholar held to be degraded by the native but unlettered versifiers; and, as one of them honestly confessed, the true intent was to render the poetic art more difficult and less common. Had this metrical system been adopted, it would have established a privileged class. The thing was practicable; and, even in our own days, iambics and spondees, dactyls and tribrachs, charm a few classical ears by their torturous arrangement of words without rhythm and cadence.* Fortunately for all vernacular poetry, it was attempted too

* For a remarkable effusion of this ancient idolatry and classical superstition, see "Quarterly Review," August, 1834.

The ancient poetry of the Greeks was composed for recitation. The people never read; for they had no books: they listened to their rhapsodists; and their practised ear could decide on the artificial construction of verses regulated by *quantity*, and not by the latent delicacy and numerosity of which modern versification is susceptible.

late among the people of modern Europe ever to be substituted for their native melody, their rhythm, the variety of their cadences, or the consonance of rhyme.

With us the design of appropriating the ancient metres to our native verse was unquestionably borrowed from Italy, so long the model of our fashions and our literature. There it had early begun, but was neither admired nor imitated.* The nearly forgotten fantasy was again taken up by Claudio Tolommei, an eminent scholar, who composed an Italian poem with the Roman metres. More fortunate and profound than his neglected predecessors, Tolommei, in 1539, published his "*Versi e Regole della* POESIA NUOVA,"—the very term afterwards adopted by the English critics,—and promised hereafter to establish their propriety on principles deduced from philosophy and music. But, before this code of "new poetry" appeared, the practice had prevailed; for Tolommei illustrates "the rules" not only by his own verses, but by those of other writers, already seduced by this obsolete novelty. But what followed? Poets who hitherto had delighted by their euphony and their rhyme were now ridiculed for the dissonance which they had so laboriously struck out. A literary war ensued! The champions for "the new poetry" were remarkable for their stoical indifference amid the loud outcries which they had raised: something of contempt entered into their bravery, and it was some time before these obdurate poets capitulated.

In France, the same attempt encountered the same fate. A few scholars, Jodelle, Passerat, and others, had the intrepidity to versify in French with the ancient metres; and, what is perhaps not generally known, later, D'Urfé, Blaise de Vigneres, and others, adopted *blank verse;* for Balzac congratulates Chapelain in 1639 that "Les vers sans rime sont morts pour jamais." French poetry, which at that period could hardly sustain itself with rhyme, denuded of this slight

* Quadrio, "Storia e raggione d'ogni Poesia," i. 606.

dress, must have betrayed the squalidness of bare poverty. The "new poetry" in France, however, seems to have perplexed a learned critic; for with the learned his prejudices leaned in its favor, but as a faithful historian the truth flashed on his eyes. The French antiquary, Pasquier, stood in this awkward position, and on this subject has delivered his opinions with great curiosity and honest naïveté: "Since only these two nations, the Greeks and the Romans, have given currency to these measures without rhymes, and that on the contrary there is no nation in this universe which poetizes, who do not in their vulgar tongue use rhymes, which sounds have naturally insinuated themselves into the ear of every people for more than seven or eight centuries, even in Italy itself, I can readily believe that the ear is more delighted by our mode of poetry than with that of the Greeks and the Romans."*

The candor of the avowal exceeds the philosophy. Our venerable antiquary had greater reason in what he said than he was himself aware of; for rhyme was of a far more ancient date than his eight centuries.

It was in the Elizabethan period of our literature, that, in the wantonness of learned curiosity, our critics attempted these experiments on our prosody; and, on the pretence of "reformed verse," were for revolutionizing the whole of our metrical system.

The musical impression made by a period consisting of long and short syllables arranged in a certain order is what the Greeks called *rhythmus;* the Latins, *numerus;* and we, *melody*, or *measure*. But in our verse, simply governed by accent, and whose rhythm wholly depends on the poet's ear, those durations of time, or sounds, like notes in music, slow or quick, long or short, which form the quantities or the time of the measured feet of the ancients, were no longer perceptible

* Pasquier, "Les Recherches de la France," p. 624, fo. 1633.

as in the inflection, the inversion, and the polysyllabic variety, of the voluble languages of Greece and Rome. The artificial movements in the hexameter were inflicting, on the ear of the uninitiated, verse without melody; and, denuded of rhyme, seemed only a dislocated prose, in violation of the genius of the native idiom.

Several of our scholars, invested by classical authority, and carrying their fasces wreathed with roses, unhappily influenced several of our poets, among whom were Sidney and Spenser, in their youth subservient to the taste of their learned friend Gabriel Harvey, to submit their vernacular verse to the torturous Roman yoke. Had this project of versification become popular, it would necessarily have ended in a species of poetry, not referring so much to the natural ear affected by the melody of emotion, as to a mechanical and severe scansion. To this, Milton seems to allude in a sonnet to Lawes, the musician: —

> "Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song
> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just *note* and *accent*, not to scan
> *With Midas' ears, committing short and long.*"

The poet of all youthful poets had a narrow escape from "dark forgetfulness," when, from the uncouth Latin hexameters, his "Fairy Queen" took refuge in the melodious stanza of modern Italy. STANYHURST has left a memorable woful version of Virgil, and the pedantic GABRIEL HARVEY had espoused this Latin intruder among the English muses. The majestic march of the Latin resounding lines, disguised in the miserable English hexameters, quailed under the lash of the satirical TOM NASH, who scourged with searching humor. "The hexameter verse I grant to be a gentleman of an ancient house (so is many an English beggar); yet this clime of ours he cannot thrive in: our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; he goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in

one syllable, and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gait which he vaunts himself with among the Greeks and Latins."

A treatise on "the New Poetry," or "the Reformed Verse," for it assumed this distinction, was expressly composed by WILLIAM WEBBE, recommendatory of this "reformation of our English verse."* Some years after, Dr. THOMAS CAMPION, accomplished in music and verse, a composer of airs, and a poet of graceful fancy in masks, fluent and airy in his rhymes, seating himself in the critic's chair, renewed the exotic system. Notwithstanding his own felicity in the lighter measures of English verse, he denounces "the vulgar and inartificial custom of RIMING, which hath, I know, deterred many excellent wits from the exercise of English poetry."† He calls it "the childish titillation of rime."

We may regret that Dr. Campion, who composed in Latin verse, held his English in little esteem, since he scattered them whenever he was called on, and not always even printed them. The physician, for such was Campion, held too cheap his honors as a poet and a musician: however, he was known in his days as "SWEET MASTER CAMPION," and his title would not be disputed in ours. In his dismissing his critical "Observations," he has prefixed a poem in what he calls "Licentiate Iambicks," which is our blank verse: it is a humorous address of an author to his little book, consisting only of nearly five leaves:—

"Alas, poor book! I rue
Thy rash selfe-love: go, spread thy papery wings;
Thy lightness cannot helpe or hurt my fame."

* "A Discourse of English Poetrie, together with the Author's Judgment touching the Reformation of our English Verse," by WILLIAM WEBBE, graduate, 1586, 4to.

† "Observations on the Art of English Poesie, by THOMAS CAMPION; wherein is demonstratively proved, and by example confirmed, that the English tongue will receive eight several kinds of numbers proper to itself, which are all in this book set forth, and were never before this time by any man attempted," 1602.

The poet DANIEL replied by his "Defence of Rime;" an elaborate and elegant piece of criticism, to which no reply was sent forth by the anti-rhymers.

It has often been inquired, How came the vernacular rhyme to be wholly substituted for the classical metres, since the invaders of the Roman Empire everywhere adopted the language of Rome with their own? for, in the progress of their dominion, everywhere they found that cultivated language established. The victors submitted to the vanquished when the contest solely turned on their genius.

A natural circumstance will explain the occasion of this general rejection of the ancient metres. These artificial structures were operations too refined for the barbarian ear. Their bards, who probably could not read, had neither ability nor inclination to be initiated into an intricate system of metre, foreign to their ear, their tastes, and their habits, already in possession of supremacy in their own poetic art. Their modulation gave rhythm to their recitative, and their musical consonance in their terminable sounds aided their memory: these were all the arts they wanted; and, for the rest, they trusted to their own spontaneous emotions.

Rhyme then triumphed; and the degenerate Latinists themselves, to court the new masters of the world, polluted their Latin metres with the rhymes too long erroneously degraded as mere "Gothic barbarisms." Had the practice of the classical writers become a custom, we should now be "committing long and short;" and we should have missed the discovery of the new world of poetic melody, of which the Grecians and the Latins could never have imagined the existence.

ORIGIN OF RHYME.

CONTENDING theories long divided the learned world. One party asserted that the use of rhyme was introduced by the Saracenic conquerors of Spain and of Sicily; for they had ascertained that the Arabian poets rhymed: the other, who had traced rhyme to a Northern source, among the Scandinavian bards, insisted that rhyme had a Gothic origin; and, as rhyme was generally used among the monks in the eighth century, they imagined, that, in the decline of ancient literature, the dexterous monks had borrowed the jingle for their church hymns, to win the ear of their Gothic lords. Both parties alike concurred in condemning rhyme as a puerile invention and a barbarous ornament, and of a comparatively modern invention.

The opinions of the learned are transmitted, till by length of time they are accepted as facts; and in this state was rhyme considered till our own days. Warton, in the course of his researches in the history of our poetry, was struck at the inaccuracy of one of these statements; for he had found that rhymed verse, both Latin and vernacular, had been practised much earlier than the period usually assigned. But Warton, though he thus far corrected the misstatements of his predecessors, advanced no further. No one, indeed, as yet, had pursued this intricate subject on the most direct principle of investigation: conjecture had freely supplied what prevalent opinion had already sanctioned; and we were long familiarized to the opprobrious epithet of "Monkish Rhymes." The subject was not only obscure, but apparently trivial; for Warton dismisses an incidental allusion to the origin of

rhyme by an apology for touching on it. "Enough," he exclaims in his impatience, "has been said on a subject of so little importance;" * and it is curious to observe, that the same vexatious exclamation occurred to a French literary antiquary. "We must not believe," said Lenglet du Fresnoy, "that we began to rhyme in France about 1250, as Petrarch pretends. The romance of Alexander existed before; and it is not probable that the first essay of our versification was a great poem. Abelard composed love-songs in the preceding century. I believe rhyme was still more ancient; and it is useless to torment ourselves to discover from whom we learned to rhyme. As we always had poets in our nation, so we have also had rhyme." † Thus two great poetical antiquaries in England and France had been baffled in their researches, and came to the same mortifying conclusion. They were little aware how an inquiry after the origin of rhyme could not be decided by chronology.

The origin of rhyme was an inquiry, which, however unimportant Warton in his despair might consider it, had, though inconclusively treated, often engaged the earnest inquiries of the learned in Italy and in Spain, in Germany and in France. It is remarkable that all the parties were equally perplexed in their researches, and baffled in their conclusions. Each inquirer seemed to trace the use of rhyme by his own people to a foreign source; for with no one it appeared of native growth. The Spaniard Juan de la Enzina, one of the fathers of the Spanish drama, and who composed an "Art of Poetry" (*Arte de Trovar*, as they expressively term the art of invention), fancied that rhyme had passed over into Spain from Italy; though in the land of redondillas, the guitar seemed attuned to the chant of their Moorish masters: but, in Italy, Petrarch,

* Warton's "Second Dissertation on the Introduction of Learning into England."

† Lenglet du Fresnoy: Preface to his edition of the "Roman de la Rose."

at the opening of his epistles, declares that they had drawn their use of rhyme from Sicily; and the Sicilians had settled that they had received it from the Provençals; while those roving children of fancy were confident that they had been taught their artless chimes by their former masters, the Arabians! Among the Germans, it was strenuously maintained that this modern adjunct to poetry derived its origin and use from the Northern scalds. Fauchet, the old Gaulish antiquary, was startled to find that rhyme had been practised by the primitive Hebrews!

Fauchet, struck by discovering the use of rhyme among this ancient people, and finding it practised by the monks in their masses in the eighth century, suggested for its modern prevalence two very dissimilar causes. With an equal devotional respect for "the people of God," and for the monks, whom he considered as sacred, he concluded that "possibly some pious Christian by the use of rhyme designed to imitate the holy people;" but, at the same time, holding, with the learned, rhyme to be a degenerate deviation from the classical metres of antiquity, he insinuates, "or perchance some vile poetaster, to eke out his deficient genius, amused the ear by terminating his lines with these ending unisons." He had further discovered, that the Greek critics had, among the figures of their rhetoric, mentioned the *homoioteleuton*, or consonance. The abundance of his knowledge contradicted every system which the perplexed literary antiquary could propose; and impatiently he concludes: "Rhyme has come to us from some part of the world, or nation, whoever it may be; for I confess I know not where to seek, nor what to conclude. It was current among the people and the languages which have arisen since the ruin of the Roman empire." *

* Much curious matter will be found in the rare volume of Fauchet's "Recueil de l'Origine de la Langue et Poesie Françoise Ryme et Romans plus, les Noms et Summaire des Œuvres, de cxxvii. Poètes François, vivant avant l'an MCCC.;" liv. i. ch. vii., 1610, 4to.

Since the days of ancient Fauchet, no subsequent investigators, even such great recent literary historians as Warton, Quadrio, Crescembini and Gray, Tiraboschi, Sismondi and Ginguéné, have extricated us by their opposite theories from these uncertain opinions. It was reserved for the happy diligence of the learned Sharon Turner to explore into this abyss of darkness.* To defend the antiquity of the rhyming Welsh bards, he pursued his researches through all languages, and demonstrated its early existence in all. His researches enable us to advance one more step, and to effect an important result, which has always baffled the investigators of these curious topics.

Rhyming poems are found not only in the Hebrew, but in the Sanscrit, in the Bedas, and in the Chinese poetry,† as among the nations of Europe. It was not unknown to the Greeks, since they have named it as a rhetorical ornament; and it appears to have been practised by the Romans, not always from an accidental occurrence, but of deliberate choice.

To deduce the origin of rhyme from any particular people, or to fix it at any stated period, is a theory no longer tenable. The custom of rhyming has predominated in China, in Hindustan, in Ethiopia; it chimes in the Malay and Javanese poetry, as it did in ancient Judæa: this consonance trills in the simple carol of the African women; its echoes resounded in the halls of the frozen North, in the kiosk of the Persian, and in the tent of the Arab, from time immemorial. RHYME must therefore be considered *as universal as poetry itself.*

Yet rhyme has been contemned as a "monkish jingle," or

* See "Two Inquiries respecting the Early Use of Rhyme," by Sharon Turner, Esq. — *Archæologia*, vol. xiv. The subject further enlarged, "On the Origin and Progress of Rhyme in the Middle Ages." — *Hist. of England*, iv. 386.

† The second book the Chinese children read is a collection conveyed in *rhyming lines.* — *Davis on the Chinese.*

a "Gothic barbarism;" but we see it was not peculiar to the monks nor the Goths, since it was prevalent in the vernacular poetry of all other nations save the two ancient ones of Greece and Rome. Delighting the ear of the man as it did that of the child, and equally attractive in the most polished as in the rudest state of society, rhyme could not have obtained this universality had not this concord of returning sounds a foundation in the human organization influencing the mind. We might as well inquire the origin of dancing as that of rhyming: the rudest society as well as the most polished practised these arts at every era. And thus it has happened, as we have seen, that the origin of rhyme was everywhere sought for, and everywhere found.

RHYMING DICTIONARIES.

If our poets in rhyme dared to disclose one of the grand mysteries of their art, they would confess, that to find rhymes for their lines is a difficulty, which, however overcome, after all has botched many a fine verse: the second line has often altered the original conception of the preceding one. The finest poems in the language, if critically examined, would show abundant evidence of this difficulty *not overcome*. This difficulty seems to have occurred to our earliest critics; for GASCOIGNE, in his "Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the making Verse or Rhyme in English," — and WEBBE, in his "Discourse," repeats the precept, — would initiate the young poet in the art of rhyme-finding: the simplicity of the critic equals the depth of his artifice.

"When you have one verse *well settled* and *decently ordered*, which you may dispose at your pleasure to end it with *what word you will*, then, whatsoever the word is, you may speedily run over the other words which are answerable thereunto (for more readiness through all the letters alphabetically),* whereof you may choose that which will *best fit the sense* of your matter in that place; as, for example, if your last word end in book, you may straightway in your mind run them over thus, — book, cook, crook, hook, look, nook, pook, &c., &c. Now, it is *twenty to one but always one of these shall jump with your former word and matter in good sense.*"

* Here is the first idea of "A Dictionary of Rhymes," which has inspired so many unhappy bards.

The poet in *rhyme* has therefore in his favor "twenty to one" of a chance that his second line may "jump" with his former one. We were not aware that the odds were so favorable, even when we look over the finished poetry of Pope, who has written so much; or of Gray, who has written so little. Boileau tells us he always chose a rhyme for his second line before he wrote out his first, that by this means he might secure the integrity of the sense; and this he called "the difficult art of rhyming." These are mysteries which only confirm the hazard which rhymers incur; and on the whole, though we do marvellously escape, the poet at every rhyming line still stands in peril.

This torture of rhyme-finding seems to have occasioned a general affliction among modern poets; and an unhappy substitute was early found in arranging collections of rhymes, and which subsequently led to a monstrous device. In Goujet's "Bibliothèque Française," vol. iii., will be found a catalogue of these rhyming dictionaries: the earliest of the French was published in 1572. Indeed, some of these French critics looked upon these rhyming dictionaries as part of the art of poetry; recommending pocket editions for those who in their walks were apt to poetize, as if finding a rhyme would prompt a thought.

Among these early attempts is an extravagant one by Paul Boyer. It is a kind of encyclopædia, in which all the names are arranged by their terminations, so that it furnishes a dictionary of rhymes.

The demand for rhymes seems to have continued; for, in 1660, D'Ablancourt Fremont published a *Dictionnaire*, which was enlarged by Richelet in 1667. It seems we were not idle in threading rhymes in our own country; for Poole, in 1657, in his "Parnassus," furnishes a collection of rhymes; and he has had his followers. But the perfect absurdity or curiosity of a rhyming lexicographer appears in one of Walker's Dictionaries of the English Language. As he

was a skilful philologist, he has contrived to make it useful for orthography and pronunciation. He advances it as on a plan "not hitherto attempted;" and his volume, on the whole, as Moreri observes of Boyer's, is a thing "*plaisant à considérer.*"

A dictionary of rhymes is as miserable a contrivance to assist a verse as counting the syllables by the finger is to regulate the measure: in the case of rhyme, it is sense which should regulate the verse; and in that of metre, it is the ear alone which can give it melody.

THE ARTE OF ENGLISH POESIE.

AMONG the arts of English poesie, the most ample and most curious is an anonymous work.* The history of an anonymous book is sometimes liable to the most contradictory evidence. The present, first printed in 1589, we learn from the work itself, was in hand as early as in 1553. The author inscribed the volume to Queen Elizabeth; and the courtly critic has often adroitly addressed "the most beautiful, or rather the beauty, of queens;" and, to illustrate that figure which he terms "the gorgeous," has preserved for us some of her regal verses.

Yet, notwithstanding this votive gift to royalty, the printer has formally dedicated the volume to Lord Burleigh; acknowledging that "this book came into my hands with *its bare title, without any author's name.*" The author himself could not have been at all concerned in delivering this work to the press; for, having addressed the volume to the queen, he would never have sought for a patron in the minister.

This ambiguous author remained unknown after the publication; for Sir John Harrington, who lived in the circle of the court, designates him as "the unknown *godfather*, that, this last year save one (1589), set forth a book called 'the Arte of English Poesie.'" About twelve years afterwards, Carew, in his "Survey of Cornwall," appears to have been the first who disclosed the writer's name as "Master Puttenham;"

* "The Arte of English Poesie, contrived in three bookes,—the first of Poets and Poesie, the second of Proportion, the third of Ornament," 1589, 4to.

but this was so little known among literary men, that three years later, in 1605, Camden only alludes to the writer as "the *gentleman* who proves that poets are the first politicians, the first philosophers, and the first historiographers." Eleven years after, Edmund Bolton, in his "Hypercritica," notices "this work (*as the fame is*) of one of Queen Elizabeth's pensioners, Puttenham." The qualifying parenthesis, "as the fame is," leaves the whole evidence in a very ticklish condition.

Who was Puttenham? A name unknown, and whose writings are unnoticed by any contemporary. Even the baptismal name of this writer has been subject to contradiction.*

In the work itself, the writer has interspersed many allusions to himself, from his nursery to his court-days. His nurse, a right-lined ancestor of the garrulous nurse of the

* Ames appears first to have called him *Webster* Puttenham. Possibly Ames might have noted down the name from Carew, as Master Puttenham; which by an error of the pen, or the printer, was transformed into the remarkable Christian name of *Webster*. I cannot otherwise account for this misnomer. Steevens, in an indistinct reference to a manuscript, revealed it to be *George;* and probably was led to that opinion by the knowledge of a manuscript work in the Harleian Collection by a George Puttenham. It is a defence of Elizabeth in the matter of the Scottish queen. Ellis, our poetic antiquary, has distinguished our author as "Webster, *alias* George." All this taken for granted, the last editor, probably in the course of his professional pursuits, falls on a nuncupative will, dated 1590, of a *George* Puttenham: already persuaded that such a name appertained to the author of the "Art of English Poetry," he ventured to corroborate what yet remained to be ascertained. All that he could draw from the nuncupative will of this *George* Puttenham is, that he "left all his goods, movable and immovable, moneys and bonds," to Mary Symes, a favorite female servant; but he infers that "he probably was our author." Yet, at the same time, there turned up another will of one *Richard* Puttenham, "a prisoner in her Majesty's Bench." *Richard*, therefore, may have as valid pretensions to "the Arte of English Poesie" as *George*, and neither may be the author. This matter is trivial, and hardly worth an inquiry.

Haslewood, laborious, but unfortunately uneducated, is the editor of an elegant reprint of this "Arte of English Poesie." A modern reader may therefore find an easy access to a valuable volume which had been long locked up in the antiquary's closet.

Capulets, had exercised his prurient faculties in expounding an indecent riddle,* which our mature critic still deemed "pretty;" but, according to one of his rhetorical technical terms, "it holds too much of the *cacheмphaton* or *foule speech*, and may be drawn unto a reprobate sense." Our author was a travelled gentleman, and, by his residence at various courts, seems to have been connected with the *corps diplomatique;* for he had been present on some remarkable occasions at foreign courts, which we discover by coeval anecdotes of persons and places. One passage relating to himself requires attention. Alluding to the polished hypocrisy practised in courts, he observes, "These and many such like disgustings we find in men's behavior, and specially in the courtiers of foreign countries, *where in my youth I was brought up*, and very well observed their manner of life and conversation; for of *mine own country I have not made so great experience.*"

This seems as ambiguous as any part of our author's history; for, at eighteen years of age, he had addressed Edward the Sixth by "Our Eclogue of Elpine." When he tells us that "he had not had so great experience of his own country as of others," we may be surprised; for no contemporary writer has displayed such intimacy with the court anecdotes of England, which have studded many of his pages. Neither does the style, which bears no mark of foreign idiom, nor the collected matter of his art of poetry, which discovers a minute acquaintance with every species of English composition, preserving for us much fragmentary poetry, at all betray a stranger's absence from home. But, what seems more extraordinary, the writer frequently alludes to learned disquisitions, critical treatises, and to dramatic compositions, of his own, — to "our comedy" and to "our enterlude;" and has frequent illustrations drawn from poems of all sorts and measures of his own growth. It is one of the singularities of this unknown

* See page 157 of "the Arte of English Poesie."

person, that his writings were numerous, and that no contemporary has ever mentioned the name of Puttenham. How are we to reconcile these discrepancies, and how account for these numberless vernacular compositions, with the condition of one who was "brought up abroad," and who had such "little experience of his own country"? We appear to read a work composed by different persons.

The same anomalous character is attached to the work as we have discovered concerning the writer.

This "Arte of English Poesie," which Warton observes "remained long as a rule of criticism," and still may be consulted for its comprehensive system, its variety of poetic topics, and its contemporary historical anecdotes, is the work of a scholar, and evidently of a courtier. His scholastic learning furnished the terms of his numerous figures of rhetoric, each of which is illustrated by examples drawn from English literature; but aware that this uncouth nomenclature might deter, as he says, "the sort of readers to whom I write, too scholastical for our MAKERS," as he classically calls our poets, "and more fit for clerks than for courtiers, for whose instruction this travail is taken," our logician was cast into the dilemma of inventing English descriptions for these Greek rhetorical figures. We had no English name: "the rule might be set down; but there was no convenient name to hold it in memory."

To familiarize the technical terms of rhetoric by substituting English descriptive ones led to a ludicrous result. The Greek term of *histeron proteron* was baptized the *preposterous:* these are words misplaced, or, as our writer calls it, "in English proverb, the cart before the horse;" as one, describing his landing on a strange coast, said thus *preposterously;* that is, placing before what should follow: —

"When we had climbed the cliff, and were ashore;" —

instead of —

"When we had come ashore, and climbed the cliff."

The *hypallage* he calls *the changeling*, when changing the place of words changes the sense; as in the phrase, "Come, dine with me, and stay not," turned into "Come, stay with me, and dine not." This change of sense into nonsense he called "the changeling," in allusion to the nursery legend, when fairies steal the fairest child, and substitute an ill-favored one. This at least is a most fanciful account of nonsense! I will give the technical terms of satire: they display a refinement of conception which we hardly expected from the native effusions of the wits of that day. *Ironia* he calls the *dry-mock; sarcasmus*, the *bitter taunt;* the Greek term *asteismus* he calls *the merry scoff*, — it is the jest which offends not the hearer. When we mock scornfully comes the *micterismus*, the *fleering frumpe;* as he who said to one to whom he gave no credit, "*No doubt, sir, of that!*" The *antiphrasis*, or the *broad flout*, when we deride by flat contradiction, antithetically calling a dwarf a giant; or addressing a black woman, "In sooth, ye are a fair one!" The *charientismus* is *the privy nippe*, when you mock a man in a *sotto voce;* and the *hyperbole*, as the Greeks term the figure, and the Latins *dementiens*, our vernacular critic, for its immoderate excess, describes as "the overreacher, or the loud liar." The rhetorical figures of our critic exceed a hundred in number, if Octavius Gilchrist has counted rightly; all which are ingeniously illustrated by fragments of our own literature, and often by poetical and historical anecdotes by no means common and stale. We must appreciate this treasure of our own antiquity; though we may smile when we learn, that while we speak or write, however naturally, we are in fact violating or illustrating this heap of rhetorical figures; without whose aid, unconsciously our *fleering frumpes*, our *merry scoffs*, and our *privy nippes*, have been intelligible all our days.

In the more elevated spirit of this work, the writer opens by defining the poet, after the Greek, to be "a maker" or creator, drawing the verse and the matter from his native

invention, — unlike the *translator*, who therefore may be said to be a versifier, and not a poet. This canon of criticism might have been secure from the malignity of hypercriticism. It happened, however, that, in the year following that in which "the Art of Poetry" was published, Sir John Harrington put forth his translation of Ariosto; and, presuming that none but a poet could translate a poet, he caught fire at the solemn exclusion. The vindictive "versifier" invented a merciless annihilation both of the critic and his "Art," by very unfair means; for he proved that the critic himself was a most detestable poet, and consequently the very existence of "the Art" itself was a nullity! "All the receipts of poetry prescribed," proceeds the enraged translator of Ariosto, "I learn out of this very book, never breed excellent poets. For, though the poor gentleman laboreth to make poetry an art, he proveth nothing more plainly than that it is a *gift*, and not an *art*; because making himself and many others so cunning in the art, yet he showeth himself so slender a gift in it."

Was this critic qualified by nature and art to arbitrate on the destinies of the Muses? Were his taste and sensibility commensurate with that learning which dictated with authority, and that ingenuity which reared into a system the diversified materials of his critical fabric? We hesitate to allow the claims of a critic whose trivial taste values "the courtly trifles," which he calls "pretty devices," among the inventions of poesy; we are startled by his elaborate exhibition of "geometrical figures in verse;" his delight in egg or oval poems, tapering at the ends, and round in the middle; and his columnar verse, whose pillars, shaft, and capital can be equally read upwards and downwards. This critic, too, has betrayed his utter penury of invention in "parcels of his own poetry," obscure conceits in barbarous rhymes; by his intolerable "triumphals," poetical speeches for recitation; and a series of what he calls "partheniades, or new-year's gifts,"—bloated eruptions of those hyperbolical adulations which the maiden

queen could endure, but which bear the traces of the poet-aster holding some appointment at court.

When the verse flowed beyond the mechanism of his rule of scanning, and the true touch of nature beyond the sympathy of his own emotions, the rhetorician showed the ear of Midas. He condemns the following lines as "going like a minstrel's music in a metre of eleven, very harshly in my ear, whether it be for lack of good rime or of good reason, or of both, I wot not;" and he exemplifies this lack of "good rime and good reason, or both," by this exquisitely tender apostrophe of a mother to her infant: —

> "Now suck, child, and sleep, child, thy mother's own joy,
> Her only sweet comfort to drown all annoy;
> For beauty, surpassing the azured sky,
> I love thee, my darling, as ball of mine eye."

Such a stanza, indeed, may disappoint the reader, when he finds that we are left without any more.

In the history of this ambiguous book, and its anonymous author, I discover so many discrepancies and singularities, such elaborate poetical erudition, combined with such ineptitude of poetic taste, that I am inclined to think that the more excellent parts could never have been composed by the courtly trifler. It is remarkable that this curious "Art of English Poetry" was ascribed to SIDNEY; and Wanley, in his catalogue of the Harley Library, assigns this volume to Spenser.* I lay no stress on the singular expression of Sir John Harring-

* The following letter is an evidence of the uncertain accounts respecting this author among the most knowing literary historians. Here, too, we find that Webster or George or Richard is changed into Jo.! —

"What authority Mr. Wood has for Jo. Puttenham's being the author of the 'Art of English Poetry,' I do not know. Mr. Wanley, in his 'Catalogue of the Harley Library,' says that *he had been told that Edmund Spenser was the author of that book, which came out anonymous.* But Sir John Harrington, in his preface to 'Orlando Furioso,' gives so hard a censure of that book, that Spenser could not possibly be the author." — *Letter from Thomas Baker to the Hon. James West*, printed in the "European Magazine," April, 1788.

ton, applied to the present writer, as "the unknown *godfather;*" which seems to indicate that the presumed writer had named an offspring, without being the parent. Nor will I venture to suggest that this work may at all have been connected with that treatise of "the English poets," which Spenser, we know, had lost, and never recovered. The poet lived ten years after the present publication, and it does not appear that he ever claimed this work. Manuscripts, however, we may observe, strangely wandered about the world in that day; and such literary foundlings often fell into the hands of the charitable. In that day of modest publication, some were not always solicitous to claim their own; and there are even instances of the original author, residing at a distance from the metropolis, who did not always discover that his own work had long passed through the press; so narrow then was the sphere of publication, and so partial was all literary communication.

One more mystery is involved in the authorship of this remarkable work: first printed in 1589, we gather from the book itself that it was in hand at least as early as in 1553. This glorious retention of a work during nearly forty years would be a literary virtue with which we cannot honor the trifler who complacently alludes to so many of his own writings which no one else has noticed, and, unluckily for himself, has furnished for us so many "parcels of his poetry" to exemplify "the art."

If we resolve the enigma by acknowledging that this learned and curious writer has not been the only critic who has proved himself to be the most woful of poetasters, this decision will not account for the mysterious silence of the writer in allowing an elaborate volume, the work of a great portion of a life, to be cast out into the world unnamed and unowned.

I find it less difficult to imagine that some stray manuscript, possibly from the relics of SIDNEY, or perhaps the lost one of SPENSER, might have fallen into the hands of some courtly

critic, or "the Gentleman Pensioner," who inlaid it with many of his own trivialities: the discrepancy in the ingenuity of the writing with the genius of the writer in this combination of learning and ineptitude would thus be accounted for; at present, it may well provoke our scepticism.

THE DISCOVERIE OF WITCHCRAFT.

A SINGLE volume sent forth from the privacy of a retired student, by its silent influence may mark an epoch in the history of the human mind among a people.

Such a volume was "the Discoverie of Witchcraft, by Reginald Scot;" a singular work, which may justly claim the honor in this country of opening that glorious career which is dear to humanity, and fatal to imposture.

Witchcraft and magic, and some similar subjects, through a countless succession of ages, consigned the human intellect to darkness and to chains. In this country, these conspiracies against mankind were made venerable by our laws, and consecrated by erring piety. They were long the artifices of malignant factions, who found it mutually convenient to destroy each other by the condemnation of crimes which could never be either proved or disproved. The sorcerers and witches under the Church of Rome were usually the heretics; and our Henry the Eighth, who was a Protestant pope, transferred the grasp of power to the civil law, and an Act of Parliament of the Reformation made witchcraft felony. Dr. Bulleyn, a celebrated physician and a reformer, who lived through the gloomy reign of Philip and Mary, bitterly laments, "that, while so many blessed men are burned, witches should walk at large." When the Act fell into disuse, Elizabeth was reminded, by petitions from the laity and by preaching from the clergy, that "witches and sorcerers were wonderfully increasing, and that her majesty's subjects pined away until death." Witchcraft was again confirmed to be felony.

The learned and others were fostering the traditions of the people about spirits, the incubus and the succubus, the assemblies of witches, and the sabbaths of Satan. Some constructed their theories to explain the inexplicable; and too many, by torture, extorted their presumed facts and delusive confessions. The sage doated; the legal functionaries were only sanguinary executioners; and the merciful, with the kindest intentions, were practising every sort of cruelty by what was termed trials to save the accused. The history of these dismal follies belongs even to a late period of the civilization of Christian Europe! An enlightened physician of Germany had raised his voice in defence of the victims who were suffering under the imputation of sorcery:* not denying the satanic potency, he maintained that the Devil was very well able to execute his own malignant purposes, without the aid of such miserable agents. It required a protracted century ere Balthaser Bekker's "World Bewitched" could deprive Satan himself of his personality; indeed, of his very existence. But it was a subject to be tenderly touched: superstition was a sacred thing, and too often riveted with theology; and, though the learned Wierus had thus guarded his system, to a distant day he encountered the polemical divines. One of his fiercest assailants was a layman, the learned Bodin: he who has composed so admirable a treatise on Government, now deeply plunged into the "Demonomanie des Sorciers." The volume of Wierus, he tells us, "made his hair stand on end." "Shall we," he cries, "credit a little physician" before all the philosophers of the world, and the laws of God which condemn sorcerers?

While Wierus and Bodin had been thus employed, an Englishman, Reginald Scot, in the serene retreat of a studious life, was silently laboring on the development of this great moral conquest over the prejudices of Europe. Reginald

* "De Prestigiis Demonum et Incantationibus ac Veneficiis," 1564.

Scot, who passed his life in the occupation of his studies, seems to have concentrated them on this great subject; for he has left no other work, except an esteemed tract on the cultivation of the hop,—the vine of his Kentish county. Although he took no degree at college, his erudition was not the less extensive, as appears by his critical knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek. But it was chiefly by his miscellaneous reading, where nothing seems to have escaped his insatiable curiosity on the extraordinary subjects which he ventured to scrutinize with such minute attention, that he was enabled to complete one of the most curious investigations of the age. Anthony Wood, in his peculiar style, tells us that "Scot gave himself up solely to *solid reading*, and to the perusal of *obscure authors* that had by the generality of the learned been neglected." This is a curious description of the early state of our vernacular literature, and of those students, who, watchful over the spirit of the times, sought a familiar acquaintance with the opinions of their contemporaries. All writers were condemned as "obscure" who stood out of the pale of classical antiquity; and plain Anthony, who rarely dipped into the writings of Greece and Rome, but was an incessant lover of the miscellaneous writers of modern date, distinguishes his favorites as "solid reading." In the days of Reginald Scot, our scholars never ventured to quote other authority than some ancient; but the poets from Homer to Ovid, the historians from Tacitus to Valerius Maximus, and the essayists from Plutarch to Aulus Gellius, could not always supply arguments and knowledge for an age and on topics which had nothing in common with their own.

With more elevated views than Wierus, Scot denied the power of sorcerers, because it attributed to them an omnipotence which can only be the attribute of divine power. Our philosopher could publish only half the truth. "My question is not, as many fondly suppose, whether there be witches or not, but whether they can do such miraculous works as are

imputed unto them." He thus adroitly eludes an argument which the public mind was not yet capable of comprehending. The "Discoverer" had to encounter a fierce host in shaking the predominant creed. The passions of mankind were enlisted against the zealous antagonist of an ancient European prejudice: the vital interests of priestly exorcists were at stake. To doubt of a supernatural agency, seemed, to some, to be casting a suspicion over miracles and mysteries. The most ticklish point was the difficulty of explaining scriptural phrases, which Reginald Scot denied related to witches, in the ordinary sense attached to these miserable women; the Hebrew term merely designating a female who practised the arts of "a poisoner" or "a cozener or cheat." The whole scene of the witch of Endor seems to have racked the "Discoverer's" invention through several chapters, to unveil the preparatory management of such incantations by the ventriloquizing Pythonissa, and her confederate, some lusty priest. All these, Scot presumes to trace in the obscure and interrupted narrative of the Israelitish Macbeth, who, in his despair, hastened by night to listen to his approaching fate, which hardly required the gift of prophecy to predict.

Our "Discoverer" prepared his readers for a revolution in their opinions. It appears that in his day, notwithstanding some fairies still lurking in the by-corners of our poets, the whole fairy creed had in fact passed away. He appeals to this native mythology, now utterly exploded, as an evidence of popular infatuation; and our philosopher observes, that he cannot hope that the partial reader should look with impartial eyes on this book: it were labor lost to ask for this; for, he adds, "I should no more prevail therein than if *a hundred years since I should have entreated your predecessors* to believe that Robin Goodfellow, that great but antient bull-beggar, had been but a cousening merchant, and no devil indeed." This was a philosophical parallelism; and the corollary pinched the present generation concerning their witches,—

they who were now holding their fathers dotards for their belief in fairies.

The volume abounds with many strange incidents, which its singular subject involved. The solitary witch of the homestead was not the poetic witch uttering her incantations at her mystic caldron. Her homely feats are familiar; but the revelations of the impostures are not. "The devils and spirits," the powers of the kingdom of darkness, are more fantastic. These raw materials have been woven in the rich looms of Shakspeare and Goethe. Our author included in his volume a complete treatise of legerdemain, or the conjuring art. To convince the people that many acts may appear miraculous without the intervention of a miracle, he ingeniously initiated himself into the deceptious practices of the juggler; but he dreaded lest the spectators of his dexterity should depose against his own witchcraft, and "the familiar," his confederate. Our seer, to save himself from fire or water, has not only minutely explained these "deceitful arts," but cautiously accompanied them by woodcuts of the magical instruments used on these occasions. At the time, these were surprising revelations. The sagacity of our author anticipated the fate of his work. It appears to have shaken the credulity of a very few reflecting magistrates; yet such scholars as Sir Thomas Smith, the great political writer, when he retired from public life, as a justice of peace, was active in punishing witches. But the book was denounced by the divines.

When Reginald Scot's work was translated into Dutch, we learn from an arch-enemy of philosophy, the intolerant Calvinistical polemic, Voetius, that "this book was an inexhaustible source, whence not a few learned and unlearned persons in the Netherlands have begun to doubt, and grow sceptics and libertines with regard to witchcraft. Our country is infected with libertines and half-libertines; and they have proceeded to such a pitch of ignorance, that this set of new Sadducees laugh at all the operations and apparitions of the

devils as phantoms and fables of old women, and timorous superstition." The work was more successful abroad than at home; and, indeed, how often have the benefactors of mankind experienced that the voice of foreigners is the voice of posterity! They decide without prepossessions.

The FIRST edition of the "Discoverie of Witchcraft," 1584, is of extreme rarity, the copies having been burned by the order of James, on his accession to the English throne, in compliance with the act of Parliament of 1603, which ratified a belief in witchcraft throughout the three kingdoms; but the author had not survived to see that day. This awful prejudice broke out afresh under the fanatical government, and gave rise to an infamous class of men who were called "witch-finders." When a reward was publicly offered, there seemed to be no end in finding witches. It was probably this great evil which reminded the people of Scot, whose work was reprinted in 1651; but the public so eagerly required another edition, that it was again republished in 1665. The fact was, that justices, judges, and juries had so little improved by the *second* edition, that many had kept with great care their note-books of "Examinations of Witches," and were discovering "hellish knots of them." It was only in the preceding year that Sir Matthew Hale had left for execution two female victims, without even summing up the evidence; solely resting on the fact, that "there were witches;" for which assumption he appealed "to the Scriptures," and, he added, to "the wisdom of all nations"! What is not less remarkable in this trial, the illustrious corrector of "vulgar errors," Sir Thomas Browne, in his medical character examining the accused person, who was liable to fainting fits, acknowledged that the fits were natural and common; but the philosopher was so prepossessed that the woman was a witch, that he pronounced against her, alleging this mystical explanation of "the subtleties of the Devil," who had taken this opportunity of her natural fits to be "co-operating with her malice"!

What a demonstration, that superstition holds its mastery even over the philosophic intellect!

The popular prejudice was confirmed by narratives of witchcraft, by Joseph Glanvil, one of the early founders of the Royal Society; by the visionary learning of the Platonic Dr. More; and by the theological dogmatism of Meric Casaubon. Dr. More was desirous that every parish should keep a register of all authentic histories of apparitions and witchcraft: and Glanvil was so stanch a believer, that he considered that the strong unbelief in some persons was an evidence of what they denied; for that so confident an opinion could not be held but by some kind of witchcraft and fascination in the senses. All these, and such as these, treat with extreme contempt and cover with obloquy "the Father of the modern Witch-advocates," "the Gallant of the Old Hags!" This was our Reginald Scot.

The most elaborate treatise on the subject was now sent forth by John Webster,—"the Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft," 1677, fol. He defends Scot and Wierus against Glanvil and Casaubon. He was a clergyman, and dares not agitate the question, *an sint*, whether there be witches or not; but *quomodo sint*, in what manner they act, and what the things are they do, or can perform. The state of the question is not simply the being of witches, or *de existencia*, but only *de modo existendi*. The dispute of their manner of existing necessarily supposes their existence. He has, however, detected many singular impostures, and the volume is full and curious.*

* Webster notices the popular delusions of the country people in the following passage, in which he is speaking of a sound judgment as necessary to a competent witness: "They ought to be of a sound judgment, and not of a vitiated and distempered phantasie nor of a melancholic constitution, for these will take a bush to be a bugbear, and a black sheep to be a demon; the noise of the wild swans flying high in the night, to be spirits,—or, as they call them here in the north, *Gabriel Ratchets;* the calling of a daker hen in the meadow, to be the *whistlers;* the howling of the female fox in a

Glanvil and his "Sadducismus Triumphatus, or full Evidence concerning Witches," 1668, — a book so popular that I have never met with a very fair copy, — introduced with plenary evidence a minute narrative of "the Demon of Tedworth," whose invisible drum beat every night, for above a year, in the house of some reverend magistrate, who had evidently raised a spirit which he could not lay, and whose Puck-like pranks wofully deranged the whole unsuspicious family. This tale, confirmed by affidavits, but shaken by demurrers, was long an article of faith, but finished by furnishing the comedy of Addison's "Drummer." The controversy about witches, including that of ghosts, which were equally the incessant but volatile phantoms of their chase, now assumed a more serious aspect than ever. The illustrious Boyle, who had observed the unguarded heat with which it was pursued, vainly cautioned the parties, that even religion might suffer by weak arguments drawn from uncertain statements. Boyle had more reason to say this than one might suppose; for Dr. More, ever too vehement and too fanciful, had exclaimed in his unhappy conviction, "No bishop, no king! no spirit, no God!" *

gill or clough for the male, to be the cry of fairies." "The *Gabriel Ratchets*," in our author's time, seem to have been the same with the German *Rachtvogel*, or *Rachtraven*. The word and the superstition are well known in Lancashire, though in a sense somewhat different; for the *Gable-Rachets* are supposed to be something like litters of puppies yelping (gabbling) in the air. *Ratch* is certainly a dog in general.

The *whistlers* are the green or whistling plovers, which fly very high in the night, uttering their characteristic note. — *Whitaker's History of Whalley.*

* In a correspondence I have read between Dr. More and one of his enthusiastic disciples, the Rev. Edmund Elys, the letters usually turn on the reality of apparitions and magical incantations. Both these learned men were hunting about all their lifetimes to find a true ghost. Elys often breaks out in triumph that he has at length discovered an authentic ghost: in subsequent letters, the evidence gradually diminishes; and finally the apparition and evidence vanish together. The following pious doubts, addressed to the philosophic More, may amuse the reader: —

Shadwell, in his "Lancashire Witches," resolved to advance nothing without authority, accompanies that comedy with ample notes, drawn from the writings of witch-believers. His witches, therefore, are far beneath those of Shakspeare; for they do nothing but what we are told witches do: the whole system of witchery is here exhibited. In his remarkable preface, Shadwell tells us, that, if he had not represented them as *real* witches, "it would have been called atheistical by a prevailing party."

The belief in witchcraft was maintained chiefly by that fatal error which had connected the rejection of any supernatural agency in old women with religious scepticism; and it was fostered by the statutes, which with the lawyer admitted of no doubt. "We cannot doubt of the existence of

"Most honored dear Sir,—I should be troublesome to you if I did not repress many strong inclinations to write to you; for I do not take greater comfort in any thing than in the thoughts of *you*, and the *notions* you have communicated to the world.

"I now entreat you to tell me one of your arguments why this act is unlawful: viz., to inquire by this black art (as I am sure it is, though I am told some preachers allow it) whether such or such a *suspected person* has stolen a thing; viz., by putting a key into the midst of a Bible, and clasping or tying the Bible on it, and then hanging the key upon some man's finger put into the hollow of the handle; and then one of the company saying these words (Ps. l. 19, 20), 'When thou a thief dost see,' &c., to these words, 'To use that life most vile.' If the Bible turn upon the finger (holding it by the key) when such or such a person is named, then he is judged to be the thief. Some persons that dined at the same table with me had an humor to try this trick. I declared it was very *wicked*, &c.; but, however, they would do it. And a gentleman of great acquaintance in the world said that a learned divine asserted it was no hurt, &c. I thought it might not be a sin for me to stay in the room, after I had made that profession of my dissent, &c. They tried what would be done; and, upon the naming of one or two, the key did not move; but, on the naming of one (who afterwards was known to be an accomplice in the theft), the Bible turned on the finger very plainly in the sight of divers persons, myself being one. The gentleman that was most eager to have the *experiment* holds that there never were any *apparitions*, &c. I told him that this was equivalent *to an apparition; for* here was an *ocular demonstration* of the existence and operation of an intelligent invisible being, &c."

witchcraft, seeing that our law ordains it to be punished by death," was the argument of Sir George Mackenzie, the great Scottish advocate. Nor is it less sad to see such minds as that of the great Dr. Clarke, celebrated for his logical demonstrations, thus reasoning on witchcraft, astrology, and fortune-telling: "All things of this sort, whenever they have any reality in them, are evidently diabolical; and, when they have no reality, they are cheats and lying impostures."* The great demonstrator thus confesses "the reality" of these chimeras! Another not less celebrated divine, Dr. Bentley, infers that "no English priest need affirm the existence of sorcery or witchcraft; since they now have a public law, which they neither enacted nor procured, declaring these practices to be felony!" † Did the doctor know that churchmen have had no influence in creating that belief, or in enacting this statute?

The gravity of Blackstone seems strangely disturbed, when, as a lawyer, he was compelled to acknowledge its existence. "It is a crime of which one knows not well what account to give." The commentator on the laws of England found no other resource than to turn to Addison, whose gentle sagacity could only discover, that, "*in general*, there has been such a thing as witchcraft, though one cannot give credit to any *particular* modern instance of it." Not one of these writers had yet ventured to detect the hallucinations of self-credulity in the victims, and the crimes of remorseless men in their persecutors. The name and the volume of their own countryman had never reached them, who, two centuries before, had elucidated these chimeras.

After the statute against witchcraft had been repealed in England, we must not forget that an act of the Assembly of the Calvinistic Church of Scotland confesses, "as a great national sin, the act of the British Parliament abolishing the burning and hanging of witches."

* In his "Exposition of the Church Catechism."

† Remarks upon a late "Discourse of Free-thinking," 1743, p. 47.

The name of Reginald Scot does not appear in the "Biographia Britannica;" and it was only from a short notice by Bayle, that Dr. Birch, in his translation of the General Dictionary, was induced to draw up a life of our earliest philosopher. Such was the fate of this "English gentleman," as Bayle has described him; and the philosophical reader, in what is now before him, may detect the shifting shades of truth, till it settles in its real and enduring color: the philosopher had demonstrated a truth which it required a century and a half for the world to comprehend.

That such courageous and generous tempers as that of REGINALD SCOT should fail themselves of being the spectators of that noble revolution in public opinion which was the ripening of their own solitary studies, is the mortifying tale of the benefactors of mankind.

THE FIRST JESUITS IN ENGLAND.

THE fate of the English Protestants, exiles under the Marian administration, was, as the day arrived, to be the lot of the English Papists under the government of Elizabeth. These opposing parties, when cast into the same precise position, had only changed their place in it; and in this revolution of England, in both cases alike, the expatriated were to return, and those at home were to become the expatriated.

During the short reign of Edward, conformity was not pressed; and notwithstanding two statutes, the one to maintain the queen's supremacy, and the other strictly to enjoin the use of the Book of Common Prayer, through the first ten or twelve years of Elizabeth, Romanist and Protestant entered into the same parish church. "The old Marian priests," whom the rigid papists indeed afterwards scornfully decried, were wont to inquire of any one, to use their own term, "whether they were *settled;*" and were satisfied to lure from the seduction of a Protestant pulpit some lonely waverer, if by chance they found an easy surrender. There were, indeed, many who would neither "settle" nor "waver;" and these were called "Occasionalists:" they insisted that "occasional conformity" had nothing *per se malum;* that human laws might be complied with or neglected, according to circumstances; so learned doctors had opined! The old religion seemed melting into the new, when the Romanists, of another temper than "the old Marian priests," protested against this pacific toleration, and procured from the fathers of the Council of Trent a declaration against schismatics and heretics: this was

but the prelude of what was to come from a final authority; but this was sufficient to divide the Romanists of England, and to alarm the Protestants, yet tender in their reformation.

The sterner Romanists gradually seceded from their preferments in the church or their station in the universities, and at length forsook the land. Two eminent persons effected a revolution among their brother-exiles, of which our national history bears such memorable traces. These extraordinary men were Dr. ALLEN, of Oriel College, a canon in the Cathedral of York, and who subsequently was invested with the purple as the English cardinal; and ROBERT PARSONS, of Baliol, afterwards the famous Jesuit. They left England at different periods; but, when they met abroad, their schemes were inseparable, — and possibly some of their writings; though it may be doubted whether the subtile and daring genius of Parsons, which Cardinal Allen declared equalled the greatest whom he had known, ever acted a secondary part.

Allen abandoned his country for ever in 1565. He soon projected the gathering of his English brothers scattered in foreign lands: he conceived the formation, for the fugitive Romanists of England, of another Oxford, ostensibly to furnish a succession of Romish priests to preserve the ancient papistry of England, which was languishing under "the old Marian priests." In 1568, an English college was formed at Douay: in twenty years, Allen witnessed his colleges rise at Rheims, at Rome,* at Louvain and St. Omer, and at Valladolid, at Seville, and at Madrid. From these cradles and nurseries of

* At Rome there was "the English Hospital," founded by two of the kings of our Saxon Heptarchy: a thousand years had consecrated that small domicile for the English native; but now the emigrants, and not the pilgrims, of England, claimed an abode beneath the papal eye. It had been a refuge to the fugitives from the days of Henry the Eighth: subsequently this English Hospital, under the auspices of Cardinal Allen, assumed the higher title of "the English College at Rome;" and the Jesuit Parsons closed his days as its rector, without attaining to the cardinalship.

holiness to Rome, and of revolt to England, issued those seminary priests whose political religionism elevated them into martyrdom, and involved them in inextricable treason.*

In these labors, Allen had, as early as 1575, associated himself with Parsons, who in that year had entered into the order of the Jesuits. Allen sought the vigorous aid of the "soldiery of Jesus," alleging "that England was as glorious a field for the propagation of faith as the Indies." From that time, the more ambiguous policy and deeper views of that celebrated society gave a new character to the Romish missionaries to England, and were the cause of all their calamities; a history written in blood, at whose legal horrors our imagination recoils, and our sympathy for the honorable and the hapless may still dim our eyes with tears.

Parsons, pensioned by Spain, and patronized by Rome; wide and deep in his comprehensive plans; slow in deliberation, but decisive in execution; of a cold and austere temper, yet flexible and fertile in intrigue; with his working head and his ceaseless hand, — once at least looked for nothing less than the dominion of England, ambitious to restore to Papal Rome a realm which had once been her fief. This daring Machiavelian spirit had long been the subtle and insidious counsellor, conjointly with Allen, of the cabinets of Madrid and of Rome. From Rome came the denunciatory bull of 1569, renewed with an artful modification in 1580, and again in 1588; and from Spain, the Armada.

It has been ascertained by his own writings, that the Jesuit Parsons, who had obtained free access to the presence of the Spanish monarch, left Madrid in 1585, about the time when

* The seminarists were universally revered as candidates of martyrdom. See Baronius, "Martyrol." Rome, 29 Dec. St. Philip Neri, who lived in the neighborhood of the English Seminary in Rome, would frequently stand near the door of the house to view the students going to the public schools. This saint used to bow to them, and salute them with the words, "Salvete flores martyrum." — *Plowden's Remarks on Missions of Gregorio Panzani*, Liege, 1794, p. 97.

the preparations for the Armada began, and returned to Madrid in 1589, the year after its destruction: so that the English Jesuit, whose sanguine views had aided the inspiration, had also the fortitude to console and to assure the Spanish monarch that "the punishment of England had only been deferred." Of this secret intercourse with the court of Madrid we have the express avowal of the English cardinal, Allen, in that infuriated "Admonition to the Nobility and People of England," the precursor of the Armada; in which this Italianated Englishman, contrary to those habits and that language of amenity to which he had been accustomed, suddenly dropped the veil, and, at the command of his sacerdotal suzerain, raged against Elizabeth more furiously than had the Mar-prelate Knox.

In the year 1580, PARSONS and CAMPIAN came the first Jesuit missionaries to their native soil. Camden was acquainted with both these personages at college. The contrast of their personal dispositions might have occasioned their selection; for the chiefs of this noted order not only exercised a refined discernment in the psychology of their brothers and agents, but always acted on an ambidextrous policy. Campian, with amenity of manners, and sweetness of elocution, with a taste imbued with literature, was adapted to win the affections of those whom Parsons sometimes terrified by his hardihood. They landed in England at different ports; and, though at first separated, subsequently they sometimes met. They travelled under a variety of disguises, sure of concealment in the priests' secret chamber of many a mansion, or they haunted unfrequented paths. A tradition in the Stonor Family still points at a tangled dell in the park where Campian wrote his "Decem Rationes," and had his books and his food conveyed to him.

We have an interesting account of the perilous position which he occupied: his devoted spirit, not to be subdued by despair, but tinged with the softest melancholy, is disclosed in

a letter to the general of the order. He tells him that he is obliged to assume a most antic dress, which he often changes as well as his name. But his studious habits were not interrupted amid this scene of trouble: he says, "Every day I ride about the country. Sitting on my horse, I meditate a short sermon, which, coming into the house, I more perfectly polish. Afterwards, if any come to me, I discourse with them, to which they bring thirsty ears." But, notwithstanding that most threatening edicts were dispersed against them, he says, that "by wariness, and the prayers of good people, we have in safety gone over a great part of the island. I see many forgetting themselves to be careful for us." He concludes, "We cannot long escape the hands of heretics, so many are the eyes, the tongues and treacheries, of our enemies. Just now I read a letter, where was written, 'Campian is taken.' This old song now so rings in mine ears wheresoever I come, that very fear hath driven all fear from me: my life is always in my hand. Let them that shall be sent hither for our supply bring this along with them, well thought on beforehand."

Our Jesuits in some respects betrayed themselves by their zeal in addressing the nation through their own publications. Parsons, under the lugubrious designation of John Howlet, — that is, Owlet, — sent forth his "screechings;" and Campian, too confident of his irrefutable "Decem Rationes," was so imprudent as to publish "A Challenge for a Public Disputation" in the presence of the queen. The eye of Walsingham opened on their suspected presence. A Roman-Catholic servant unwittingly betrayed Campian, who suffered as a state victim.* Parsons saw his own doom approaching, and van-

* As Roman Catholics usually interpolate history with miracles, so we find one here; being assured that the judge, while pasing sentence on Campian, drawing off his glove, found his hand stained with blood, which he could not wash away, as he showed to several about him who can witness of it. — *Lansdowne Manuscripts*, 982, fol. 21.

ished! This able Jesuit was confident that the great scheme was to be realized by means more effective than the martyrdom of young priests. His awful pen was to change public opinion; and nearly forty works attest his diligence, while he mused on other resources than the pen to overturn the kingdom.

The history of the order records, that, thirty years afterwards, Father Parsons, lying on his deathbed, ordered to be brought to him the cords which had served as the instruments of torture of his martyred friend; and, having kissed them fervently, bound round his body these sad memorials of the saintly Campian.*

Two of the numerous writings ascribed to Parsons — one before the Armada, and the other subsequent to it — are remarkably connected with our national history: the ability of the writer, and the boldness of the topics, have at various periods influenced public opinion and national events. The first, "A Dialogue between a Scholar, a Gentleman, and a Lawyer," was printed abroad in 1583 or 1584, and soon found a conveyance into England. The first edition was distinguished as "Father Parsons's Green Coat," from its green cover. It is now better known as "Leicester's Commonwealth," a title drawn from one of its sarcastic phrases.

To describe this political libel as a mere invective would convey but an imperfect notion of its singularity. The occasion which levelled this artful and elaborate scandalous chronicle at Leicester, and at Leicester alone, remains as unknown as this circumstantial narrative descends to us unauthenticated and unrefuted. That the whole was framed by invention, is as incredible as that the favorite of Elizabeth during thirty years could possibly have kept his equal tenor throughout such a criminal career, besides not a few atrocities which were prevented by intervening accidents with which the writer

* "Hist. Soc. Jesu." Pars quinta, tomus posterior. Auctore Jos. Juvencio, 1710.

seems equally conversant as with those perpetrated. The mysterious marriages of Leicester; his first lady found at the foot of the stairs with her neck broken, but "without hurting the hood on her head;" husbands dying quickly; solemnized marriages reduced to contracts,—are remarkable accidents. We find strange persons in the earl's household: Salvador, the Italian chemist, a confidential counsellor, supposed to have departed from this world with many secrets, succeeded by Dr. Julio, who risked the promotion. We are told of the lady who had lost her hair and her nails; of the exquisite salad which Leicester left on the supper-table when called away, which Sir Nicholas Throgmorton swore had ended his life; of the Cardinal Chatillon, who, after having been closeted with the queen, returning to France, never got beyond Canterbury; of the sending a casuist with a case of conscience to Walsingham, to satisfy that statesman of the moral expediency of ridding the state of the Queen of Scots by an Italian philter,—all these incidents almost induce one to imagine the existence of an English Borgia, drawn full-length by the hand of a Machiavel.

If this strange history were true, it would not be wanting in a moral; for, if Leicester were himself this poisoner, there seems some reason to believe that the poisoner himself was poisoned. "The beast," as Throgmorton called this earl, found but a frail countess in the Lady Lettice, whose first husband, the Earl of Essex, had suddenly expired. The Master of the Horse had fired her passion; a hired bravo, in cleaving his skull, did not succeed in despatching the wounded lover: where the blow came from they did not doubt. Leicester was conducting his countess to Kenilworth: stopping at Cornbury Hall, in Oxfordshire, the lady was possibly reminded of the tale of Cumnor Hall. To Leicester, after his usual excessive indulgence at table, the countess deemed it necessary to administer a cordial: it was his last draught! Such is the revelation of the page, and latterly the gentleman,

of this earl. Certain it is that Leicester was suddenly seized with fever, and died on his way to Kenilworth; and that the Master of the Horse shortly after married the poisoning countess of the great poisoner.*

Had the writer unskilfully heaped together such atrocious acts or such ambiguous tales, the libel had not endured. The life of this new Borgia is composed of richer materials than extravagant crimes. It furnishes a picture of eventful days and busied personages; truth and fiction brightening and shadowing each other. Some close observer in the court circle, one who sickened at the queen's insolent favorite, was a malicious correspondent. Some realities lie on the surface; and Sir Philip Sidney was baffled or confounded when he would have sent forth his chivalric challenge to the veiled accuser.

The adversaries of the Jesuits referred to Busenbaum, a favorite author with the order, to inform the world that among the artifices of the political brotherhood was inculcated the doctrine of systematic calumny. "Whenever you would ruin a person or a government, you must begin by spreading calumnies to defame them. Many will incline to believe or to side with the propagator. Repetition and perseverance will at length give the consistency of probability, and the calumnies will stick to a distant day." A nickname a man may chance to wear out; but a system of calumny, pursued by a faction, may descend even to posterity. This principle has taken full effect on this state favorite. The libel was most diligently spread about: "La Vie Abominable" was read throughout Europe. This story of the "subject without

* This remarkable incident, in keeping with the rest, was discovered by Dr. Bliss, in a manuscript note on "Leicester's Ghost," as communicated by the page to the writer from his own personal observations. — *Athenæ Oxon.*, ii. col. 74.

If this voracious Apicius did not die of a surfeit, the fever might have been caught from the cordial. The marriage of the Master of the Horse seems to wind up the story.

subjection," who "shoots at a diadem" in England or Scotland, and turns England into a "Leicesterian commonwealth," raised princely anger: the queen condescended to have circular letters written to protest against it, considering the libel as reflecting on herself, in the choice of so principal a counsellor; and though her majesty discovered that the author was nothing less than "an incarnate devil," yet to this day the state favorite Leicester remains the most mysterious personage in our history; nor is there any historian from the days of Camden who dares to extenuate suspicions which come to us palpable as realities. In truth, the life of Leicester is darkness: his political intrigues probably were carried on with all parties, which probably he adopted, and betrayed by turns: at last his caprice stood above law. And, even in his domestic privacy, there were strange incidents, dark and secret, which eye was not to see, nor ear to listen to; and we have a remarkable chance-evidence of this singular fact in that mysterious sonnet of Spenser, prefixed to his version of Virgil's "Gnat," whose sad tale was his own, dedicated "to the deceased lord:" his "cloudy tears" have left "this riddle rare" to some "future Œdipus" who has never arisen.*

The Armada flying from our coasts evinced to Spain and Rome that Elizabeth was not to be dethroned. What then remained to hold a flattering vision of the English crown to Philip, and to cast the heretical land into confusion? The genius of this new Machiavel rose with the magnitude of the subject and the singularity of the occasion.

The policy or the weakness of Elizabeth never consented to settle the succession; and, as the queen aged, all Europe became more interested in that impending event. This was a cause of national uneasiness, and an implement for political mischief.

In 1594 was printed at Antwerp "A Conference about the

* See the subsequent article on "Spenser."

next Succession to the Crown of England." The purpose of this memorable tract is twofold. The first part inculcates the doctrine, that society is a compact made by man with man for the good of the commonwealth; that the forms of government are diverse, and therefore are by God and nature left to the choice of the people; that kings do not derive their title from any birthright or lineal descent, but from their coronation, with conditions and admissions by the consent of the people; and that kings may be deposed, or the line of succession may be altered, as many of our own and other monarchs have suffered from various causes, being accountable for their misgovernment or natural incompetency. "Commonwealths have sometimes chastised lawfully their lawful princes, though never so lawfully descended." This has often been "commodious to the weal public;" and "it may seem that God prospered the same by the good success and successors that hence ensued." *

This theory of monarchical government was opposed to those "absurd flatterers who yield too much power to princes;" and was not likely, as we shall see, to be only a work of temporary interest. Let us, however, observe that this advocate of the people's supremacy over their sovereign's was himself the vowed slave to passive obedience, and the indefeasible and absolute rule of the sacerdotal suzerain.

The second division is a very curious historical treatise on the titles and pretensions of ten or eleven families of the English blood-royal; "what may be said for them, and what against them." From its topics, it was distinguished as "the Book of Titles." It was well adapted to perplex the nation,

* "There is," continues our author, "a point much to be noted;" which is, "what men have commonly succeeded in the places of such as have been deposed?" The successors of five of our deposed monarchs have been all eminent princes: "John, Edward the Second, Richard the Second, Henry the Sixth, and Richard the Third, have been succeeded by the three Henrys, — the Third, Fourth, and Seventh; and two Edwards, — Third and Fourth."

or raise up competitors; while, however, it reminded them "of the slaughter and the executions of the nobility of England." In this uncertainty of the succession, Isabella of Spain, whose ancestry is drawn from the Conquest through many descents, is shown to have the best title, and James of Scotland the worst.

The book appeared in London with a dedication to the Earl of Essex: this was a stroke of refined malice, and produced its full effect on the queen. In this panegyric on the earl's "eminence in place and in dignity, in favor of the prince and in high liking of the people," the wily Jesuit intimated that "no man is like to have greater sway on deciding of this great affair [the succession], when time shall come for that determination, and those that shall assist you, and are likest to follow your fame and fortune." The jealous alarm of Elizabeth had often been roused by the imprudence of the earl, and on this occasion it thundered with all her queenly rage: she herself showed him the dangerous eulogiums of the insidious dedicator, till the hapless earl was observed to grow pale, and withdrew from court with a mind disturbed, and was confined by illness till the queen's visit once more restored him to favor.

The immediate effect of the "Conference" appears by an act of Parliament of the 35th of Elizabeth, enacting that "whoever was found to have it in his house should be guilty of high treason;" but its more permanent influence is remarkable on several national occasions. This tract contributed to hasten the fate of the hapless Charles. The doctrine of cutting off the heads of kings, "the whole body being of more authority than the only head," was too opportune for the business in hand to be neglected by the Independents. The first part, licensed by their licenser, was printed at the charge of the Parliament, disguised as "Several Speeches delivered at a Conference concerning the Power of Parliament to proceed against their King for Misgovernment." The nine chapters

of the Conference were turned into these nine pretended speeches!* These furnished the matter of the speech of Bradshaw at the condemnation of the monarch; and even Milton, in his "Defence of the English People," adopted the doctrines. Never has political pamphlet directed an event more awful, and on which the destiny of a nation was suspended. Even an abstract of it served for the nonce, under the title of "the Broken Succession of the Crown of England," at the time that Cromwell was aiming at restoring the English monarchy in his own person. It was again renovated in 1681, at the time of agitating the bill of exclusion against James the Second. I believe it has appeared in other forms. Nor was the fortune of "Leicester's Commonwealth" less remarkable in serving the designs of a party. It was twice reprinted in 1641, as a melancholy picture of a royal favorite; and again, probably with the same political design, in 1706.

Parsons's claim to these two memorable tracts has been impugned. My ingenious friend, Dr. Bliss, has referred to two letters of Dr. Ashton, Master of Jesus College, and Dean Mosse, on the subject of "Leicester's Commonwealth," which he considers "fully prove" that it was not the work of Parsons. I give these letters.

Dr. Ashton to Dean Mosse.

"There is nothing in the book that favors the Spanish invasion, and all the treason is only against Leicester. Parsons has been esteemed the author of it; but I can't yet believe that 'twas his, for several reasons: —

"First, There's nothing in it of the fierce and turbulent spirit

* I have not seen this edition of "the Conference," or "Speeches:" but it must assuredly have suffered some mutilations; for Parsons often puts down some marginal notes which were not suitable to the republicans of that day; such, for instance, as these, — "A Monarchy the best Government;" "Miseries of Popular Governments." Mabbott, the licenser, must have rescinded such unqualified axioms.

of that Jesuit; but a tender concern for the queen and government, both in church and state.

"Secondly, The book makes a papist own that several of the priests and others were traitors; and often commends Burleigh, who was the chief persecutor, and ordered the writing of 'the Book of Justice,' &c.: which certainly Parsons would not have done, whose errand into England not long before was to renew the excommunication of the queen, and declare her subjects freed from their allegiance; nay, bound to take up arms against her; especially since Campian, his brother missionary, was one of those martyrs, and he himself very narrowly escaped.

"Thirdly, When Parsons and Campian came into England in '80, it was to further the designs of the King of Spain, and persuade the people, that, upon the queen's forfeiture, he had a right to take possession of her crown. But there's nothing looks that way in the book; unless defending the title of the Queen of the Scots and her son be writing for the invasion. There was a book written a little before this, for the Scotch succession, by Lesly, Bishop of Rosse, under the name of 'Morgan,' even by the connivance of Queen Elizabeth, as Camden tells us: but the seminary priests and Jesuits were all upon the Spanish right by virtue of the Pope's bull of excommunication; and, upon this foot, Parsons afterwards wrote his 'Andr. Philopater,' and 'Book of Titles,' in the name of N. Doleman.

"Fourthly, I can't think Parsons capable of writing this book; for how could a man, that from '75 to his dying day (bating a few months in the year '80) lived at Rome, be able to know all the secret transactions, both in *court* and *country*, in England, which perhaps were mysteries to all the nation, except a few statesmen about the queen?

"Lastly, I can't believe that Parsons, who was expelled (or forced to resign his fellowship in Baliol) for his immoralities, and then pretended to be a physician, and at last went to Rome and turned Jesuit, would tell that story of Leicester's management of the University of Oxford. There are several other improbabilities.

"The book seems to be written by a man moderate in religion (whether Papist or Protestant, I can't say), but a bitter enemy to Leicester; one that was intimate with all the court affairs, and,

to cover himself from *the bear's* fury, contrived that this book should come as it were from abroad, under the name of Parsons."

Dr. Mosse's Notes on the above Letter.

"First, He points out several facts to show that the book must have been written at the end of 1584, certainly between 1583 and 1585, when in '85 Leicester went general into Holland; of which there is no mention in the book, as Drake observes.

"Secondly, The design. I see nothing in the book relating to the invasion; the design being to support the title of the Queen of Scots and her son. Dr. James was the first who in print affirmed Parsons to be the only author; which was then in many mouths, that he wrote it from materials sent him by Burleigh. But as it is not very likely that Parsons, who lived at Rome, should be acquainted with all the transactions set down in that book, so 'tis less probable that Burleigh should pitch upon him for such a work; and I take the report to be grounded only on a passage in the book that mentions the *papers* Burleigh had against Leicester."

Dr. Mosse then gives what Wood has written, and Wood's inference, that neither Pitts nor Ribadeneira giving it in the list of his writings is a sufficient argument; and the doctor concludes:—

"In short, the author is very uncertain; and, for any thing that appears in it, it may as well be a Protestant's as a Papist's. I should rather think it the work of some subtle courtier, who, for safety, got it printed abroad, and sent it to England under the name of Parsons." *

Allowing these arguments to the fullest extent, they are not sufficient to disprove the authorship ascribed to Parsons. The drift and character of this English Jesuit seem not to have been sufficiently taken in by these critics. There would

* Cole's Manuscripts, xxx. 129. Cole adds, that Baker, in a manuscript note upon Pitt's and Ribadeneira's silence, observes, "That's no argument: the book was a libel, and libels are not mentioned in catalogues by friends."

certainly be no difficulty in the Jesuit assuming the mask of a moderate religionist and a loyal subject: for the advantage of the disguise, he would even venture the bold stroke of condemning the martyrs. The conclusion of Dr. Mosse, that the book might be written by either a Protestant or a Papist, betrays its studied ambiguity. It was usual with the Jesuits to conform to prevalent opinions to wrestle with them. Sometimes the Jesuit was the advocate for the dethronement of monarchs, and at other times urged passive obedience to the right divine. In truth, it is always impossible to decide on the latent meaning of the Jesuitic pen. Pascal has exhausted the argument.

Dr. Ashton may be mistaken when he asserts that Parsons and Campian came to England in 1580 to further the designs of the King of Spain. The policy of the Roman-Catholic party at that moment did not turn on the Spanish succession: during the life of the Scottish Mary, the party were all united in one design; it was at her death, in 1587, that it split into two opposite factions. At the head of one stood the Jesuit Parsons: in his rage and despair, having failed to win over the Scottish prince, he raised up the claims of the Spanish line, reckless of the ruin of his country by invasion and internal dissension. The other party, British at heart, consisting of laymen and gentlemen, would never concur in the invasion and conquest of England by a foreign prince. This curious contingency has been elucidated by our ambassador at the court of France, Sir Henry Neville, in a letter to Cecil.* It is therefore quite evident why "the book did not look *that way*," as Dr. Ashton expresses it, and why all Parsons's subsequent writings did.

Dr. Ashton considers it impossible that Parsons, who lived abroad so much of his lifetime, should be so intimate with the secret transactions of the court and country of England. But

* Winwood's "Memorials," vol. i. p. 51.

Parsons kept up a busy communication with this country. This he has himself incidentally told us, in his "Memorial for Reformation," written in 1596: he says, "I have had occasion, *above others*, for more than twenty years, not only to know the state of matters in England, but also of many foreign nations." It is recorded that he received three hundred letters from England on his "Book of Titles." He was very critical in the history of our great families; and had a taste for personal anecdote, even to the gossip of the circle. In a remarkable work which he sent forth under the name of "Andreas Philopater," a Latin reply to the queen's proclamation, he describes her ministers as *sprung from the earth.* Of Sir Nicholas Bacon, he says that he was an under-butler at Gray's Inn; of Lord Burleigh, that his father served under the king's tailor, and that his grandfather kept an alehouse; and that for himself, during Mary's reign, he had always his beads in his hand. In this defamatory catalogue, the Earl of Leicester is not forgotten: the son of a duke, the grandson of an esquire, and the great-grandson of a carpenter; a more flagitious man, a more insolent tyrant, England never knew; *never had the Catholics a more bitter enemy;* books, both in the French and the English language, have exposed his debaucheries, his adulteries, his homicides, his parricides, his thefts, his rapines, his perjuries, his oppressions of the poor, his cruelties, his deceitfulness, and the injuries he did to the Catholic religion, to the public, and to private families. This is quite a supplement to Leicester's "Commonwealth," condensing all its original spirit.

That Lord Burleigh should have supplied materials for this political libel, stands next to an impossibility. One passage asserts that "the Lord Treasurer hath as much in his keeping of Leicester's own handwriting as is sufficient to hang him, if he durst present it to her majesty." This could only have been a random stroke of the hardy writer; for, were it absolutely true, that sage would never have intrusted that secret

to any man. It would have been placing his own life in jeopardy. As for the tattle of the lady, who, in delivering a letter from Leicester into the hands of Lord Burleigh, "at the door of the withdrawing chamber" was instructed to drop it in a way that it might attract the queen's notice, and induce her majesty to read it, it surely was not necessary for Lord Burleigh to communicate this "shift" of Leicester's practices: the lady might have deposited this secret manœuvre in the ear of the faithless courtier, who unquestionably contributed his zealous quota to this Leicesterian Commonwealth.

With regard to "the Conference," the Roman-Catholic historian, Dodd, and others, have inclined to doubt whether Parsons was the author; and their argument is,—not an unusual one with the Jesuits,—you cannot prove it, and he has denied it. Cardinal Allen and Sir Francis Englefield may have contributed to this learned work; but Parsons held the pen. It appeared under the name of Doleman; and it is said that the harmless secular priest who bore that name fell into trouble in consequence. We may for once believe Parsons himself, that the name was chosen for its significance, as "a man of dole," grieving for the loss of his country. He has in other writings continued the initials, N. D., associating his feelings with these letters. On the same querulous principle, he had formerly taken that of "John Howlett," or Owlet. He fancied such significant pseudonymes, in allusion to his condition: thus he took that of "Philopater." He varied his initials, as well as his fictitious names. He was a Proteus whenever he had his pen in his hand,—Protestant and Romanist, Englishman and Spaniard.

It is now, however, too late to hesitate in fixing on the true parent of these twin productions: twins they are, though, in the intellectual state, twins are not born on the same day. These productions are marked by the same strong features; their limbs are fashioned alike; and their affinity betrays itself, even in their tones. The author could not always escape

from adopting a peculiar phraseology, or identical expressions, which unavoidably associate the later with the earlier work; the same in style, in manner, and in plan. Imitation is out of the question where there is identity. One pen composed these works, as they did thirty more.

The English writings of the Jesuit PARSONS have attracted the notice of some of our philological critics. Parsons may be ranked among the earliest writers of our vernacular diction, in its purity and pristine vigor, without ornament or polish. It is, we presume, Saxon English, unblemished by an exotic phrase. It is remarkable that our author, who passed the best part of his days abroad, and who had perfectly acquired the Spanish and the Italian languages, and slightly the French, yet appears to have preserved our colloquial English from the vicissitudes of those fashionable novelties which deform the long-unsettled Elizabethan prose. To the elevation of Hooker his imagination could never have ascended; but in clear conceptions, and natural expressions, no one was his superior. His English writings have not a sentence which to this day is either obsolete or obscure. Swift would not have disdained his idiomatic energy. Parsons was admirably adapted to be a libeller or a polemic.

HOOKER.

THE government of Elizabeth, in the settlement of an ecclesiastical establishment, had not only to pass through the convulsive transition of the "old" to the "new religion," as it was called at the time; but subsequently it was thrown into a peculiar position, equally hateful to the zealots of two antagonist parties or factions.

The Romanists, who would have disputed the queen's title to the crown, were securely circumscribed by their minority, or pressed down by the secular arm; they were silenced by penal statutes, or they vanished in a voluntary exile; and even their martyrs were only allowed to suffer as traitors. A more insidious adversary was lurking at home: itself the child of the Reformation, it had been nourished at the same breast, and had shared in the common adversity; and this youthful Protestantism was lifting its arm against its elder sister.

A public event, when it becomes one of the great eras of a nation, has sometimes inspired one of those "monuments of the mind," which take a fixed station in its literature, addressed to its own, but written for all times. And thus it happened with the party of the MAR-PRELATES; for these mean and scandalous satirists and their abler chiefs were the true origin of Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity." The scandalous pamphlets of the MAR-PRELATES met their fate, crushed by the sharper levity of more refined wits: the more solemn volumes of their learned chiefs encountered a master-genius, such as had not yet risen in the nation.

In the state of the language, and the polemical temper of these early opposite systems of church, and indeed of civil government, it was hardly to be expected that the vindication of the ruling party should be the work of an elevated genius. The vernacular style was yet imperfectly moulded, the ear was not yet touched by modulated periods, nor had the genius of our writers yet extended to the lucid arrangement of composition: moreover, none had attained to the philosophic disposition which penetrates into the foundations of the understanding, and appeals to the authority of our consciousness. On a sudden appeared this master-mind, opening the hidden springs of eloquence, — the voice of one crying from the wilderness.

It had been more in the usual course of human affairs, that the whole controversy of ecclesiastical polity should have remained in the ordinary hands of the polemics: the cold mediocrity of the Puritan Cartwright might have been answered by the cold mediocrity of the Primate Whitgift. Their quarrel had then hardly passed their own times; and "the admonition" and "the apology," and all "the replies and rejoinders," might have been equally suffered to escape the record of an historian.

But such was not the issue of this awful contest: and the mortal combatants are not suffered to expire; for a master-genius has involved them in his own immortality.*

* When our literary history was only partially cultivated, the readers of Hooker were often disturbed, amidst the profound reasonings of "the Ecclesiastical Polity," by frequent references to volumes and pages of T. C. The editors of Hooker had thrown no light on these mysterious initials. Contemporaries are not apt to mortify themselves by recollecting that what is familiar to them may be forgotten by the succeeding age. Sir John Hawkins, a literary antiquary, drew up a memoir which explains these initials as those of Thomas Cartwright, and has correctly arranged the numerous tracts of the whole controversy. But, Hawkins having consigned this accurate catalogue to "the Antiquarian Repertory," it could be little known; and Beloe, in his "Anecdotes of Literature," vol. i., transcribing the entire memoir of Hawkins, *verbatim*, without the slightest acknowledgment, obtains a credit

The purity and simplicity of Izaak Walton's own mind reflected the perfect image of HOOKER: the individualizing touches and the careful statements in that vital biography seem as if Hooker himself had written his own life.

We first find our author in a small country parsonage, at Drayton-Beauchamp, near Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire; where a singular occurrence led to his elevation to the mastership of the Temple.

Two of his former pupils had returned from their travels, — Sir Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer, men worthy of the names they bore: for the one became his ardent patron; and the other, the zealous assistant in his great work. Longing to revisit their much-loved tutor, who did not greatly exceed them in age, they came unexpectedly; and, to their amazement, surprised their learned friend tending a flock of sheep, with a "Horace" in his hand. His wife had ordered him to supply the absence of the servant. When released, on returning to the house, the visitors found that they must wholly furnish their own entertainment, — the lady would afford no better welcome; but even the conversation was interrupted by Hooker being called away to rock the cradle. His young friends reluctantly quit his house to seek for quieter lodgings; lamenting that his lot had not fallen on a pleasanter parsonage, and a quieter wife to comfort him after his unwearied studies. "I submit to God's will while I daily labor to possess my soul in patience and peace," was the reply of the philosophic man who could abstract his mind amid the sheep, the cradle, and the termagant.

The whole story of the marriage of this artless student would be ludicrous, but for the melancholy reflection that it brought waste and disturbance into the abode of the author of the "Ecclesiastical Polity."

According to the statutes of his college, he had been ap-

for original research. Beloe is referred to for this *authentic* information by Burnet, in his "Specimens of English Prose-writers."

pointed to preach a sermon at Paul's Cross. He arrived from Oxford weary and wet, with a heavy cold. Faint and heartless, he was greatly agitated lest he should not be able to deliver his probationary sermon; but two days' nursing by the woman of the lodgings recovered our young preacher. She was an artful woman, who persuaded him that his constitutional delicacy required a perpetual nurse; and for this purpose offered, as he had no choice of his own, to elect for him a wife. On his next arrival, she presented him with her daughter. There was a generosity in his gratitude for the nursing him for his probationary sermon, which only human beings wholly abstracted from the concerns of daily life could possibly display. He resigned the quiet of his college to be united to a female destitute alike of personal recommendations and of property. As an apology for her person, he would plead his short-sightedness; and for the other, that he never would have married for any interested motive. Thus the first step into life of a very wise man was a folly which was to endure with it. The wife of Hooker tyrannized over his days, and at last proved to be a traitress to his fame.

The mastership of the Temple was procured for the humble rector of Drayton-Beauchamp by the recommendation of his affectionate Edwin Sandys. But not without regret did this gentle spirit abandon the lowly rectory-house for "the noise" of the Temple Hall. Hooker required for his happiness neither elevation nor dignities, but solely a spot wherein his feeble frame might repose, and his working mind meditate: solitude to him was a heaven, notwithstanding his eternal wife Joan!

Hooker might have looked on the Temple as a vignette represents the greater picture. The Temple was a copy reduced of the kingdom, with the same passions and the same parties. What had occurred between the Archbishop Whitgift and the Puritan Cartwright was now opened between the lecturer and the master of the Temple.

The evening lecturer at the Temple was Walter Travers, an eminent man, of insinuating manners and of an irreproachable life. He had been nursed in the presbytery of Geneva, and was the correspondent of Beza in the French, and of Knox in the Scottish Church: above all, Travers was the firm associate of Cartwright, and the consulted oracle of the English dissenters. He ruled over an active party of the younger members; and, by insensible innovations, appears to have there established the new ecclesiastical commonwealth, which at first consisted of the most trivial innovations in ceremonies and the most idle distinctions. Travers was looking confidently to the mastership, when the appointment of Hooker crossed his ambitious hopes.

With the disciples of parity, a free election, and not a royal appointment, was a first state principle. To preserve the formality, since he could not yet possess the reality, Travers suggested to the new master of the Temple that he should not make his appearance till Travers had announced his name to the body of the members, and then he would be admitted by their consent. To this point in "the new order of things," the sage Hooker returned a reasonable refusal. "If such custom were here established, I would not disturb the order; but here, where it never was, I might not of my own head take upon me to begin it." The formality required was, in fact, a masked principle, which cast a doubt on his right, and on the authority which had granted it. "You conspire against me," exclaimed the nonconformist, "affecting superiority over me;" and, condensing all the bitterness of his mingled religion and politics, he reproached Hooker that "he had entered on his charge by virtue *only of an human creature*, and not by the *election of the people*." With TRAVERS the people were more than "human creatures:" the voice of the people was a revelation of Heaven; this sage, probably, having first counted his votes. These were the inconveniences of a transition to a new political

system: the parties did not care to understand one another. These two good men, for such they were, now brought into collision, bore a mutual respect, connected, too, by blood and friendly intercourse. But in a religious temper or times, while men mix their own notions with the inscrutable decrees of Heaven, who shall escape from the torture of insolvable polemics? Abstruse points of scholastic theology opened the rival conflict. A cry of unsound doctrine was heard. "What are your grounds?" exlaimed TRAVERS. "The words of St. Paul," replied HOOKER. "But what author do you follow in expounding St. Paul?" Hooker laid a great stress on reason on all matters which allowed of the full exercise of human reason. Two opposite doctrines now came from the same pulpit! The morning and the evening did not seem the same day. The son of Calvin thundered his shuddering dogmas: the child of Canterbury was meek and merciful. If one demolished an unsound doctrine, it was preached up again by the other. The victor was always to be vanquished, the vanquisher was always to be victor. The inner and the outer Temple appeared to be a mob of polemics.

Travers was silenced by "authority." He boldly appealed to her majesty and the privy council, where he had many friends. His petition argued every point of divinity, while he claimed the freedom of his ministry. But there stood Elizabeth's "black husband," as the virgin queen deigned in her coquetry to call the archbishop. The party of Travers circulated his petition, which was cried up as unanswerable: it was carried in "many bosoms." Hooker was compelled to reply; and the churchmen extolled "an answer answerless:" the buds of the great work appear among these sterile leaves of controversy.*

* Both these papers of Travers and Hooker are preserved in Hooker's Works. Many curious points are discussed by Hooker with admirable reasoning. The divinity of Hooker, who is the firm advocate of legal authority, is enlightened and tolerant; while Travers, who advocated unrestrained

The absence of Travers from the Temple seemed to be more influential than even his presence. He had plenteously sown the seeds of nonconformity, and the soil was rich. Hooker had foreseen the far-remote event: "Nothing can come of contention but the mutual waste of the parties contending, till a common enemy dance in the ashes of them both." It must be confessed that Hooker had a philosophical genius.

It was amid the disorders around him that the master of the Temple meditated to build up the great argument of polity, drawn from the nature of all laws, human and divine. The sour neglect and systematic opposition of the rising party of the dissenters had outwearied his musings. Clinging to the great tome which was expanding beneath his hand, the studious man entreated to be removed to some quieter place. A letter to the primate on this occasion reveals, in the sweetness of his words, his innate simplicity. He tells, that when he had lost the freedom of his cell at college, yet he found some degree of it in his quiet country parsonage: but now he was weary of the noise and opposition of the place; and God and nature did not intend him for contention, but for study and quietness. He had satisfied himself in his studies, and now had begun a treatise in which he intended the satisfaction of others: he had spent many thoughtful hours, and he hoped not in vain; but he was not able to finish what he had begun, unless removed to some quiet country parsonage, where he might see God's blessings spring out of our mother earth, and "eat his own bread in peace and privacy."

The humble wish was obtained, and the great work was prosecuted.

In 1594, four books of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" were published; and, three years afterwards, the fifth. These are for ever sanctioned by the last revisions of the author. The

personal freedom, is, in his divinity, narrow and merciless. He sees only "the elect," and he casts human nature into the flames of eternity.

intensity of study wore out a frame which had always been infirm; and his premature death left his manuscripts roughly sketched, without the providence of a guardian.

These unconcocted manuscripts remained in the sole custody of the widow. Strange rumors were soon afloat, and transcripts from Hooker's papers got abroad, attesting, that, in the termination of the "Ecclesiastical Polity," the writer had absolutely sided with the nonconformists. The great work, however, was appreciated of such national importance, that it was deemed expedient to bring it to the cognizance of the privy council, and the widow was summoned to give an account of the state of these unfinished manuscripts. Consonantly with her character, which we have had occasion to observe, in the short interval of four months which had passed since the death of Hooker, this widow had become a wife. She had at first refused to give any account of the manuscripts; but now, in a conference with the archbishop, she confessed that she had allowed certain puritanic ministers "to go into Hooker's study, and to look over his writings; and, further, that they burned and tore many, assuring her that these were writings not fit to be seen." There never was an examination by the privy council; for, the day after her confession, this late widow of Hooker was found dead in her bed. A mysterious coincidence! The suspected husband was declared innocent, so runs the tale told by honest Izaac Walton.

These manuscripts were now delivered up to the archbishop, who placed them in the hands of the learned Dr. Spenser to put into order: he was an intimate friend of Hooker, and long conversant with his arguments. However, as this scholar was deeply occupied in the translation of the Bible, he intrusted the papers to a student at Oxford, Henry Jackson, a votary of the departed genius.

On the decease of Dr. Spenser, the manuscripts of Hooker were left as "a precious legacy" to Dr. King, Bishop of London, in 1611. They were resigned with the most painful

reluctance by the speculative and ingenious student to whom they had been so long intrusted, that he looked on them with a parental eye, having transcribed them and put many things together according to his idea of the system of Hooker.* During the time the manuscripts reposed in the care of the Bishop of London, an edition of the five books of the "Ecclesiastical Polity," with some tractates and sermons, was published in 1617.† Had Dr. King thought that these manuscripts were in a state fitted for publication, he would have doubtless completed that edition. He died in 1621, and the manuscripts were claimed by Archbishop Abbot for the Lambeth Library.

Again, in 1632, the five undoubted genuine books were reprinted. Laud, then Archbishop of Canterbury, attracted probably by this edition, examined the papers. He was startled by some antagonist principles, and left the phantom to sleep in its darkness: whether some doctrines which broadly inculcate *jure divino* were touches from the Lambeth quarter, or whether the interpolating hand of some presbyter had insidiously turned aside the weapon, the conflicting opinions could not be those of the judicious Hooker.

But their fate and their perils had not yet terminated: the episcopalian walls of Lambeth were no longer an asylum, when the manuscripts of Hooker were to be grasped by the searching hands and heads of Prynne and Hugh Peters, by a vote of the Commons! At this critical period the sixth and eighth books were given to the world, announced as "a work long expected, and now published according to the most authentique copies." We are told of six transcripts with which this edition was collated. It is perplexing to understand when these copies got forth, and how they were all alike deficient in

* "A studious and cynical person, who never expected or desired more than his small preferment. He was a great admirer of Richard Hooker, and collected some of his small treatises." — *Athenæ Oxonienses.*

† Anthony Wood has said it contained all the eight books (followed by General Dictionary and Biographia Britannica), and accused Gauden of pretending to publish three books for the first time in 1662.

the seventh book, which the setter-forth of this edition declares to be irrecoverable. After the Restoration, Dr. Gauden made an edition of Hooker: in the dedication to the king, he offers the work as "now augmented, and I hope completed, with the three last books, so much desired and so long concealed." This remarkable expression indicates some doubt whether he possessed the perfect copies; nor does he inform us of the manner in which he had recovered the lost seventh book. The recent able editor of the works of Hooker favors its genuineness by internal evidence, notwithstanding it bears marks of hasty writing: but he irresistibly proves that the sixth book is wholly lost; that which is named the sixth being never designed as a part of the "Ecclesiastical Polity."

Both the great parties are justly entitled to suspect one another: a helping hand was prompt to twist the nose of wax to their favorite shape; and the transcripts had always omissions, and, we may add, commissions. Some copies of the concluding book asserted that "princes on earth are only accountable to Heaven;" while others read, "to the people." We perceive the facility of such slight emendations, and may be astonished at their consequences; but we need not question the hands which furnished the various readings. When we recollect the magnificent entrance into the work, we must smile at the inconclusive conclusion, the small issue from so vast an edifice. "Too rigorous it were that the breach of human law should be held a deadly sin. A mean there is between extremities, *if so be that we can find it out.*" Never was the *juste milieu* suggested with such hopeless diffidence. Such was not the tone, nor could be the words, of our eloquent and impressive HOOKER. From the first conception of his system, his comprehensive intellect had surveyed all its parts, and the intellectual architecture was completed before the edifice was constructed. This admirable secret in the labor of a single work, on which many years were to be consumed, our author has himself revealed to us; a secret which

may be a lesson. "I have endeavored that every former part might give strength unto all that follow, and every latter bring some light unto all before: so that if the judgments of men do but hold themselves in suspense, as touching the first more general meditations, till in order they have perused the rest that ensue, what may seem dark at the first will afterwards be found more plain, even as the latter particular decisions will appear, I doubt not, more strong, when the other have been read before." * Here we have an allusion to a noble termination of his system.

This great work of Hooker strictly is theological; but here it is considered simply as a work of literature and philosophy. The first book lays open the foundations of law and order, to escape from "the mother of confusion which breedeth destruction. The lowest must be knit to the highest." We may read this first book as we read the reflections of Burke on the French Revolution, where what is peculiar or partial or erroneous in the writer does not interfere with the general principles of the more profound views of human policy. And it is remarkable, that during the anarchical misrule of France, when all governments seemed alike unstable, some one, who had not wholly lost his senses among those raving politicians, published separately this *first book of "Ecclesiastical Polity;"* a timely admonition, however, alas! timeless. I was not surprised to find classed among "Legal Bibliography" the works of Hooker.

The fate of those controversies which in reality admit of no argument is singularly exemplified in the history of this great work. These are the controversies where the parties apparently going the same course, and intent on the same object, but impelled by opposite principles, can never unite: like two parallel lines, they may run on together, but remain at the same distance, though they should extend themselves to infin-

* "Ecclesiastical Polity," book first.

ity. Opposite propositions are assigned by each party, or from the same premises are educed opposite inferences. In the present case, both parties inquired after a model for church-government: there was none! Apostolical Christianity had hardly left the old synagogue. Hooker therefore asserted that the form of church-government was merely a human institution regulated by laws; and that laws were not made for private men to dispute, but to obey. The nonconformist urged the Protestant right of private judgment and a satisfied conscience. Hooker, alarmed at this irruption of schisms to maintain established authority, or rather supremacy, was driven to take refuge in the very argument which the Romanist used with the Protestant.

The elaborate preface of Hooker is a tract of itself: it is the secret history of nonconformity, and of the fiery Calvin. Yet was it from positions here laid down that James the Second declared that it was one of the two books which sent him back to the fold of Rome. It is not therefore surprising, that when a part was eagerly translated by an English Romanist to his holiness, who had declared that "he had never met with an English book whose writer deserved the name of an author!" — so low then stood our literature in the eyes of the foreigner, — that the pope perceived nothing anti-papal in the eloquent advocate of established authority, while he was deeply struck at the profundity of the genius of "a poor obscure English priest;" and the Bishop of Rome exclaimed, "There is no learning that this man has not searched into; nothing too hard for his understanding; and his books will get reverence by age." Our James the First, who, it must be allowed, was no ordinary judge of polemics, on his arrival in England inquired after Hooker, and was informed that his recent death had been deeply lamented by the queen. "And I receive it with no less sorrow," observed the new English monarch; "for I have received more satisfaction in reading a leaf in Mr. Hooker than I have had in large treatises by

many of the learned: many others write well; but yet, in the next age, they will be forgotten."

The attestations of his holiness and our James the First, to some of my readers, may appear very suspicious. They are, however, prophetic; and this is an evidence that the "Ecclesiastical Polity" must contain principles more deeply important than those which might more particularly have been grateful to these regal critics. Our sage, it is true, has not escaped from a severer scrutiny, and has been taxed as "too apt to acquiesce in all ancient tenets." What was transitory or what was partial in this great work may be subtracted without injury to its excellence or its value. Hooker has written what posterity reads. The spirit of a later age, progressive in ameliorating the imperfect condition of all human institutions, must often return to pause over the first book of "Ecclesiastical Polity," where the master-genius has laid the foundations and searched into the nature of all laws whatever. HOOKER is the first vernacular writer whose classical pen harmonized a numerous prose. While his earnest eloquence, freed from all scholastic pedantry, assumed a style stately in its structure, his gentle spirit sometimes flows into natural humor, lovely in the freshness of its simplicity.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

WERE I another Baillet, solely occupied in collecting the "*jugemens des sçavans*," — the decisions of the learned, — the name of Sir Philip Sidney would bring forth an awful crash of criticism, rarely equalled in dissonance and confusion.

He who first ventured to pronounce a final condemnation on "THE ARCADIA" of Sir PHILIP SIDNEY, as a "tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance," was Horace Walpole, — a decision suited to the heartlessness which wounded the personal qualities of an heroic man, the pride of a proud age. Have modern critics too often caught the watchword, when given out by an imposing character? The irregular Hazlitt honestly confides to us, in an agony of despair, that "Sir Philip Sidney is a writer for whom I cannot acquire a taste," tormented by a conviction that a taste should be acquired. The peculiar style of this critic is at once sparkling and vehement, antithetical and metaphysical. The volcano of his criticism heaves; the short, irruptive periods clash with quick repercussion; the lava flows over his pages, till it leaves us in the sudden darkness of an hypercriticism on "the celebrated description of the 'Arcadia.'"

Gifford, once the Coryphæus of modern criticism, whose native shrewdness admirably fitted him for a partisan both in politics and in literature, did not deem Walpole's depreciation of Sidney "to be without a certain degree of justice: the plan is poor, the incidents trite, the style pedantic." But our prudential critic harbors himself in some security by confessing to "some nervous and elegant passages."

At our northern Athens, the native coldness has touched the leaves of "the Arcadia" like a frost in spring. The agreeable researcher into the history of fiction confesses the graceful beauty of the language, but considers the whole as "extremely tiresome." Another critic states a more alarming paroxysm of criticism, — that of being "lulled to sleep over the interminable 'Arcadia.'"

What innocent lover of books does not imagine that "the Arcadia" of Sidney is a volume deserted by every reader, and only to be classed among the folio romances of the Scuderies, or the unmeaning pastorals whose scenes are placed in the golden age? But such is not the fact. "Nobody, it is said, reads 'the Arcadia:' we have known very many persons who read it, men, women, and children; and never knew one read it without deep interest and admiration," exclaims an animated critic, probably the poet Southey.* More recent votaries have approached the altar of this creation of romance.

It may be well to remind the reader, that although this volume, in the revolutions of times and tastes, has had the fate to be depreciated by modern critics, it has passed through fourteen editions, suffered translations in every European language, and is not yet sunk among the refuse of the bibliopolists. "The Arcadia" was long, and it may still remain, the haunt of the poetical tribe. SIDNEY was one of those writers whom Shakspeare not only studied, but imitated in his scenes, copied his language, and transferred his ideas.† SHIRLEY, BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, and our early dramatists, turned to "THE ARCADIA" as their text-book. Sidney enchanted two later brothers in WALLER and COWLEY; and the dispassionate Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE was so struck by

* "Annual Review," iv. 547.

† Who does not recognize a well-known passage in SHAKSPEARE, copied, too, by COLERIDGE and BYRON, in these words of SIDNEY: "More sweet than a gentle south-west wind, which comes creeping over flowery fields

"the Arcadia," that he found "the true spirit of the vein of ancient poetry in Sidney." The world of fashion in Sidney's age culled their phrases out of "the Arcadia," which served them as a complete "Academy of Compliments."

The reader who concludes that "the Arcadia" of Sidney is a pedantic pastoral has received a very erroneous conception of the work. It was unfortunate for Sidney that he borrowed the title of "the Arcadia" from Sannazaro; which has caused his work to be classed among pastoral romances, which it nowise resembles. The pastoral part stands wholly separated from the romance itself, and is only found in an interlude of shepherds at the close of each book: dancing brawls, or reciting verses, they are not agents in the fiction. The censure of pedantry ought to have been restricted to the attempt of applying the Roman prosody to English versification, the momentary folly of the day; and to some other fancies of putting verse to the torture.

"The Arcadia" was not one of those spurious fictions invented at random, where an author has little personal concern in the narrative he forms.

When we forget the singularity of the fable, and the masquerade dresses of the actors, we pronounce them to be real personages; and that the dramatic style distinctly conveys to

and shadowed waters in the extreme heat of summer"? Such delightful diction, which can only spring out of deep poetic emotion, may be found in the poetic prose of Sidney.

> "Oh! it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odor."
>
> SHAKSPEARE'S *Twelfth Night*, act i. sc. 1.

> "And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,
> O'er willowy meads and shadowed waters creeping,
> And Ceres' golden fields"
>
> COLERIDGE'S *First Advent of Love*.

> "Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
> As o'er a bed of violets the sweet south."
>
> *Don Juan*, canto 2, verse 168.

us incidents, which, however veiled, had occurred to the poet's own observation, as we perceive that the scenes which he has painted with such precision must have been localities. The characters are minutely analyzed; and so correctly preserved, that their interior emotions are painted forth in their gestures as well as revealed in their language. The author was himself the tender lover whose amorous griefs he touched with such delicacy, and the undoubted child of chivalry he drew; and, in these finer passions, he seems only to have multiplied himself.

The manners of the court of Elizabeth were still chivalric; and Sidney was trained in the discipline of those generous spirits whom he has nobly described as men of "high-erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy." Hume has censured these "affectations, conceits, and fopperies," as well became the philosopher of the Canongate; but there was a reality in this shadow of chivalry. Amadis de Gaul himself never surpassed the chivalrous achievements of the Earl of Essex: his life, indeed, would form the finest of romances, could it be written. He challenged the Governor of Corunna to single combat for the honor of the nation, and proposed to encounter Villars, Governor of Rouen, on foot or on horseback. And thus run his challenge: "I will maintain the justice of the cause of Henry the Fourth of France against the league; and that I am a better man than thou, and that my mistress is more beautiful than thine." This was the very language and the deed of one of the Paladins. It was this spirit, fantastic as it may appear to us, which stirred Sidney, when Parsons the Jesuit, or some one who lay concealed in a dark corner of the court, sent forth anonymously the famous state libel of "Leicester's Commonwealth." To the unknown libeller who had reflected on the origin of the Dudleys, that "the Duke of Northumberland was not born a gentleman," Sir Philip Sidney, in the loftiest tone of chivalry, designed to send a cartel of defiance. Touched to the quick in any blur

in the *Stemmata Dudleiana*, — which, it is said, occupied the poet Spenser when under the princely roof of Leicester, — Sidney exclaims, "I am a Dudley in blood, that duke's daughter's son; my chief honor is to be a Dudley; and truly am I glad to have cause to set forth the nobility of that blood: none but this fellow of invincible shamelessness could ever have called so palpable a matter in question." He closed with the intention of printing at London a challenge which he designed all Europe to witness. "Because that thou, the writer hereof, doth most falsely lay want of gentry to my dead ancestors, I say that thou therein liest in thy throat, which I will be ready to justify upon thee in any place of Europe where thou wilt assign me a free place of coming, as within three months after the publishing thereof I may understand thy mind. And this which I write I would send to thine own hands, if I knew thee; but I trust it cannot be intended that he should be ignorant of this printed in London, who knows the very whisperings of the Privy Chamber." *

We, who are otherwise accustomed to anonymous libels, may be apt to conclude that there was something fantastical in sending forth a challenge through all Europe, — we, who are content with the obscure rencounter of a morning, and with the lucky chance of an exchange of shots.

The narrative of "the Arcadia" is peculiar; but, if the reader's fortitude can yield up his own fancy to the feudal poet, he will find the tales diversified. Sidney had traced the vestiges of feudal warfare in Germany, in Italy, and in France; those wars of petty states where the walled city was oftener carried by stratagem than by storm, and where the chivalrous heroes, like champions, stepped forth to challenge each other in single combat, almost as often as they were viewed as generals at the head of their armies. Our poet's

* Sidney alludes to all that secret history of Leicester which Parsons the Jesuit pretends to disclose in his "Leicester's Commonwealth." This challenge was found among the Sidney Papers, but probably was not issued.

battles have all the fierceness and the hurry of action, as if told by one who had stood in the midst of the battle-field; and, in his "shipwreck," men fight with the waves ere they are flung on the shore, as if the observer had sat on the summit of a cliff watching them.

He describes objects on which he loves to dwell with a peculiar richness of fancy. He had shivered his lance in the tilt, and had managed the fiery courser in his career: that noble animal was a frequent object of his favorite descriptions; he looks even on the curious and fanciful ornaments of its caparisons; and, in the vivid picture of the shock between two knights, we see distinctly every motion of the horse and the horseman.* But sweet is his loitering hour in the sunshine of luxuriant gardens, or as we lose ourselves in the green solitudes of the forests which most he loves. His poetic eye was pictorial; and the delineations of objects, both in art and nature, might be transferred to the canvas.

There is a feminine delicacy in whatever alludes to the female character, not merely courtly, but imbued with that sensibility which St. Palaye has remarkably described as "full of refinement and fanaticism." And this may suggest an idea not improbable, that Shakspeare drew his fine conceptions of the female character from Sidney. Shakspeare solely, of all our elder dramatists, has given true beauty to woman; and Shakspeare was an attentive reader of "the Arcadia." There is something, indeed, in the language and the conduct of Musidorus and Pyrocles, two knights, which may startle the reader, and may be condemned as very unnatural and most affected. Their friendship resembles the love which is felt for the beautiful sex, if we were to decide by their impassioned conduct and the tenderness of their language. Coleridge observed that the language of these two friends in "the Arcadia" is such as we would not now use,

* See "the Arcadia," p. 267; eighth edition, 1633.

except to women; and he has thrown out some very remarkable observations.* Warton, too, has observed, that the style of friendship between males in the reign of Elizabeth would not be tolerated in the present day: sets of sonnets, in a vein of tenderness which now could only express the most ardent affection for a mistress, were then prevalent.† They have not accounted for this anomaly in manners by merely discovering them in the reigns of Elizabeth and James. It is unquestionably a remains of the ancient chivalry, when men, embarking in the same perilous enterprise together, vowed their mutual aid and their personal devotion. The dangers of one knight were to be participated, and his honor to be maintained, by his brother-in-arms. Such exalted friendships, and such interminable affections, often broke out both in deeds and words, which, to the tempered intercourse of our day, offend by their intensity. A male friend, whose life and fortune were consecrated to another male, who looks on him with adoration, and who talks of him with excessive tenderness, appears to us nothing less than a chimerical and monstrous lover! It is certain, however, that, in the age of chivalry, a Damon and Pythias were no uncommon characters in that brotherhood.

It is the imperishable diction, the language of Shakspeare before Shakspeare wrote, which diffuses its enchantment over "the Arcadia;" and it is for this that it should be studied; and the true critic of Sidney, because the critic was a true poet, offers his unquestioned testimony in Cowper:—

"SIDNEY, WARBLER OF POETIC PROSE."

Even those playful turns of words, caught from Italian models

* See Coleridge's "Table-talk," ii. 178.

† Richard Barnfielde's "Affectionate Shepherd" forms such a collection of sonnets which were popular. The poet bewails his unsuccessful love for a beautiful youth, yet professing the chastest affection. Poets, like mocking-birds, repeat the notes of others, till the cant becomes idle, and the fashion of style obsolete.

which are usually condemned, conceal some subtility of feeling, or rise in a pregnant thought.* The intellectual character of Sidney is more serious than volatile: the habits of his mind were too elegant and thoughtful to sport with the low comic; and one of the defects of "the Arcadia" is the attempt at burlesque humor in a clownish family. Whoever is not susceptible of great delight in the freshness of the scenery, the luxuriant imagery, the graceful fancies, and the stately periods, of "the Arcadia," must look to a higher source than criticism to acquire a sense which nature and study seem to deny him.

I have dwelt on the finer qualities of "the Arcadia:" whenever the volume proves tedious, the remedy is in the reader's own hands, provided he has the judgment often to return to a treasure he ought never to lose.

It is indeed hardly to be hoped, that the volatile loungers over our duodecimos of fiction can sympathize with manners, incidents, and personages which for them are purely ideal: the truth of nature which lies under the veil must escape from their eyes; for how are they to grow patient over the interminable pages of a folio, unbroken by chapters, without a single resting-place?† And I fear they will not allow for that formal complimentary style, borrowed from the Italians and the Spaniards, which is sufficiently ludicrous.

The narrative, too, is obstructed by verses, in which Sidney

* A lady who has become enamoured of the friend who is pleading for her lover, and suddenly makes the fatal avowal to that friend, thus expresses her emotion: "Grown bolder or madder, or bold with madness, I discovered my affection to him." "He left nothing unassayed to disgrace himself, to grace his friend." — P. 39.

† In the late Mr. Heber's treasures of our vernacular literature, there was a copy of "the Arcadia," with manuscript notes by Gabriel Harvey. He had also divided the work into chapters, enumerating the general contents of each. — *Bib. Heberiana*, part the first. A republication of this copy — omitting the continuations of the romance by a strange hand, and all the eclogues, and most of the verses — would form a desirable volume, not too voluminous.

never obtained facility or grace. Nor will the defects of the author be always compensated by his beauties; for "the Arcadia" was indeed a fervent effusion, but an uncorrected work. The author declared that it was not to be submitted to severer eyes than those of his beloved sister, "being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in her presence, the rest by sheets sent as fast as they were done." The writer, too, confesses to "a young head having many fancies begotten in it, which, if it had not been in some way delivered, would have grown a monster; and more sorry might I be that they came in, than they gat out." So truly has Sidney expressed the fever of genius, when working on itself in darkness and in doubt, — absorbing reveries, tumultuous thoughts, the ceaseless inquietudes of a soul which has not yet found a voice. Even on his death-bed, the author of "the Arcadia" desired its suppression: but the fame her noble brother could contemn was dear to his sister, who published these loose papers without involving the responsibility of the writer, affectionately calling the work "the Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia;" and this volume of melodious prose, of visionary heroism, and the pensive sweetness of loves and friendships, became the delight of poets.

There is one more work of Sidney, perhaps more generally known than "the Arcadia," — his "Defence of Poetry." Lord Orford sarcastically apologized, in the second edition of his "Royal and Noble Authors," for his omission of any notice of this production. "I had forgotten it," he says; and he adds, "A proof that I at least did not think it sufficient foundation for so high a character as he acquired." It was a more daring offence to depreciate this work of love than the romance which at least lay farther removed from the public eye. The "Defence of Poetry" has had, since the days of Walpole, several editions by eminent critics. Sidney, in this luminous criticism, and effusion of poetic feeling, has introduced the principal precepts of Aristotle, touched by the fire

and sentiment of Longinus; and, for the first time in English literature, has exhibited the beatitude of criticism in a poet-critic.

Sir PHILIP SIDNEY assuredly was one of the most admirable of mankind, largely conspicuous in his life, and unparalleled in his death. But was this singular man exempt from the frailties of our common nature? If we rely on his biographer Zouch, we shall not discover any: if we trust to Lord Orford, we shall perceive little else. The truth is, that, had Sidney lived, he might have grown up to that ideal greatness which the world adored in him; but he perished early, not without some of those errors of youth, which, even in their rankness, betrayed the generous soil whence they sprung. His fame was more mature than his life, which indeed was but the preparation for a splendid one. We are not surprised that to such an accomplished knight the crown of Poland was offered, and that all England went into mourning for their hero. We discover his future greatness, if we may use the expression, in the noble termination of his early career, rather than in the race of glory which he actually ran. The life of Sidney would have been a finer subject for the panegyric of a Pliny, than for the biography of a Plutarch: his fame was sufficient for the one, while his actions were too few for the other.*

* This summary of the character of Sidney I wrote nearly thirty years ago, in the "Quarterly Review."

SPENSER.

THOUGH little is circumstantially related, yet frequent outbreakings, scattered throughout the writings of Spenser, commemorate the main incidents of his existence. His emotions become dates, and no poet has more fully confided to us his "secret sorrows."

Spenser in the far north was a love-lorn youth when he composed "the Shepherd's Calendar." This rustic poem, rustic from an affectation of the Chaucerian style, though it bears the divisions of the twelve months, displays not the course of the seasons so much as the course of the poet's thoughts: the themes are plaintiff or recreative, amatorial or satirical, and even theological, in dialogues between certain interlocutors. To some are prefixed Italian mottoes; for that language then stamped a classical grace on our poetry. In the eclogue of January, we perceive that it was still the season of hope and favor with the amatory poet; for the motto is, *Anchora Speme* ("Yet I hope"): but in the eclogue of June we discover *Gia Speme Spenta* ("Already hope is extinguished"). A positive rejection by Rosalind herself had for ever mingled gall with his honey, and he ungenerously inveighs against the more successful arts of a hated rival. Rosalind was, indeed, not the Cynthia of a poetic hour: deep was the poet's first love; and that obdurate mistress had called him "her Pegasus," and laughed at his sighs.

It was when the forlorn poet had thus lost himself in the labyrinth of love, and "the Shepherd's Calendar" had not yet closed, that his learned friend Harvey, or, in his poetical

appellative, Hobbinol, to steal him away from the languor of a country retirement, invited him to southern vales, and with generous warmth introduced "the unknown" to Sir Philip Sidney. This important incident in the destiny of Spenser has been carefully noted by a person who conceals himself under the initials E. K., and who is usually designated as "the old commentator on 'the Shepherd's Calendar.'" This E. K. is a mysterious personage, and will remain undiscovered to this day, unless the reader shall participate in my own conviction.

"The Shepherd's Calendar" was accompanied by a commentary on every separate month; and this singularity of an elaborate commentary in the first edition of the work of a living author was still more remarkable by the intimate acquaintance of the commentator with the author himself. E. K. assures us, and indeed affords ample evidence, that "he was privy to all his (the poet's) designs." He furnishes some domestic details which no one could have told so accurately, except he to whom they relate; and we find our commentator also critically conversant with many of the author's manuscripts which the world has never seen. Rarely has one man known so much of another. The poet and the commentator move together as parts of each other. In the despair of conjecture, some ventured to surmise that the poet himself had been his own commentator. But the last editor of Spenser is indignant at a suggestion which would taint with strange egotism the modest nature of our bard. Yet E. K. was no ordinary writer: an excellent scholar he was, whose gloss has preserved much curious knowledge of ancient English terms and phrases. We may be sure, that a pen so abundant, and so skilfully exercised, was not one to have restricted itself to this solitary lucubration of his life and studies. The commentary, moreover, is accompanied by a copious and erudite preface, *addressed to Gabriel Harvey;* and the style of these pages is too remarkable not to be recognized. At length let

me lift the mask from this mysterious personage by declaring that E. K. is Spenser's dear and generous friend, Gabriel Harvey himself. I have judged by the strong peculiarity of Harvey's style: one cannot long doubt of a portrait marked by such prominent features. Pedantic but energetic, thought pressed on thought, sparkling with imagery, mottled with learned allusions, and didactic with subtle criticism, — this is our Gabriel! The prefacer describes the state of our bardling as that of "young birds that be nearly crept out of their nest, who, by little, first prove their tender wings before they make a greater flight. And yet our new poet flieth as a bird that in time shall be able to keep wing with the best."

From this detection, we may infer that the Commentary was an innocent *ruse* of the zealous friend to overcome the resolute timidity of our poet.* His youthful muse, teeming with her future progeny, was, however, morbidly sensible in the hour of parturition. Conscious of her powers, thus closes the address "To his Booke:" —

> "And, when thou art past jeopardie,
> Come tell me what was said of me,
> And I will send more after thee."

After several editions, the work still remained anonymous; and the unnamed poet was long referred to by critics of the day only as "the late unknown poet," or "the gentleman who wrote 'the Shepherd's Calendar.'"

In Sir Philip Sidney the youthful poet found a youthful patron. The shades of Penshurst opened to leisure and the muse. "The Shepherd's Calendar" at length concluded,

* A strange personage has been fixed on as the commentator. Spenser lodged with a Mrs. Kerke, where his parcels were directed. E. K. has been conjectured to be Mr. Kerke, her husband!

It is a proof of the deficient skill of the modern editors of Spenser, Hughes, and Aikin, that they have omitted the curious and valuable Commentary of E. K. It has been judiciously restored to the last and best edition, by Mr. Todd. The woodcuts might also have been preserved.

"the Poet's Year" was dedicated to "Maister Philip Sidney, worthy of all titles, both of learning and chivalry." Leicester, the uncle of Sidney, was gained; and from that moment Spenser entered into a golden servitude.

The destiny of Spenser was to be thrown among courtiers, and to wear the silken trammels of noble patrons, — a life of honorable dependence among eminent personages. Here a seductive path was opened, not easily scorned by the gentle mind of him whose days were to be counted by its reveries, and the main business of whose life was to be the cantos of his "Faery Queen."

Of the favors and mortifications during his career of patronage, and of his intercourse with the court, too little is known; though sufficient we shall discover to authenticate the reality of his complaints, the verity of his strictures, and all the flutterings of the sickening heart of him who moves round and round the interminable circle of "hope deferred."

Our poet was now ascending the steps of favoritism; and the business of his life was with the fair and the great. He looked up to the smiles of distinguished ladies; for to such is the greater portion of his poems dedicated. If her majesty gloried in "the Faery Queen," we are surprised to find that the most exquisite of political satires, "Mother Hubbard's Tale," should be addressed to the Lady Compton and Monteagle; that "the Tears of the Muses" were inscribed to Lady Strange; and that "the Ruins of Time" are dedicated to the Countess of Pembroke. For others, their nuptials were graced by the music of his verse, or their sorrows were soothed by its elegiac tenderness.* In the "Epithalamion" on his own marriage, the poet reminds —

* These complimentary sonnets, evidently composed "for the nonce," are not the happiest specimens in our language of these minor poems, no more than they are of the real genius of Spenser. I have seen a German reprint, consisting *only* of Spenser's Sonnets, by the learned Von Hammer. Foreign critics often startle one by their fancies on English poetry.

"The sacred sisters who have often times
Been to the aiding others to adorn,
Whom ye thought worthy of your graceful rymes,
That even the greatest did not greatly scorn
To hear their names sung in your simple lays,
But joyed at their praise."

"The Tears of the Muses," as one of his plaintive poems is called, had possibly been spared, had the poet only moved among that bevy of ladies whose names are enshrined in his volumes, around the queen, whose royalty so frequently rises with splendor in his verse. Unawares, perhaps, the gentle bard discovered that personal attachments by cruel circumstances were converted into political connections; that a favorite must pay the penalty of favoritism; and that, in binding himself more closely to his patrons, he was wounded the more deeply by their great adversary; and in gaining Sidney, Leicester, and Essex, Spenser was doomed to feel the potent arm of the scornful and unpoetic Burleigh.

The queen was the earliest and the latest object of our poet's musings. "The Maiden Queen" enters into almost every poem. Shortly after the publication of "the Shepherd's Calendar," wherein her majesty occupies the month of April, Spenser, in writing to Harvey, has this remarkable passage: "Your desire to hear of my late being with her majesty must die in itself." By this ambiguous reply, it is, however, evident that Harvey, and probably Spenser himself, had looked forwards, by the intervention of his great patrons, that "the unknown poet," as he is called by "the old commentator," would have been honored by an interview with the royal poetess. Elizabeth, among her princely infirmities, had the ambition of verse. She was afterwards saluted as —

"A peerless prince and peerless poetess" —

by Spenser, who must, however, have closed his ear at her harsher numbers.* We may regret that we know so little of

* We have several printed specimens of her majesty's poetry, which does not want for elevation of thought; but to compose poetry with the

our Spenser's intercourse with the queen. If Sidney made him known to her majesty, as Philips has told, the poet might have read to the queen the earlier cantos of his romantic epic. The poet himself has only recorded that "the Shepherd of the Ocean," Sir Walter Raleigh, brought him into the presence of Cynthia, "the Queen of the Ocean," who —

> "To his oaten pipe inclined her ear,
> And it desired, at timely hours, to hear."

The Lord Treasurer Burleigh seems to have marred those "timely hours." Spenser had lingered before the fountain of court favor; and how often the dark shadow of the political minister intervened between the poet and the throne, we are reminded by the deep sensitiveness of the victim, the murmurs, and even the scorn, of the indignant bard.

Under the patronage of Leicester, the poet's services were transferred to Lord Arthur Grey, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, who appointed Spenser his secretary. He has vindicated this viceroy's administration, in the "Faery Queen," by shadowing forth his severe justice in Arthegal, accompanied by his "Iron Man," whose iron flail "threshed out falsehood" in their quest of Ierne, in that "Land of Ire," where justice and the executioner were ever erratic.

Of the brief life of the poet, his better years were consumed in Ireland, where he filled several appointments more honorable than lucrative. His slender revenue seems not to have flourished under a grant of land from the crown, on the conditions attached to it in 1585.* Cast into active service,

energy of her prose, deprived her majesty of all the grace and melody of verse. I have been informed, on the best authority, that Elizabeth exercised her poetical pen more voluminously than we have hitherto known; for that there exists a manuscript volume of her majesty's poems in that rich repository of State-papers, — the Hatfield Collection.

* Three thousand acres of dilapidated estates of the Earl of Desmond. The receivers of these grants were called "the Undertakers," as they were bound to bring the lands into cultivation, which, after the ravages of fire

the musings of the "Faery Queen" were assuredly often thrown aside: its fate was still dubious; for Ireland was not a land of the Muses, as he himself declared; when a chance occurrence, the visit of Rawleigh to that country, gave Spenser another Sidney. The "Faery Queen" once more opened its mystical leaves on the banks of the Mulla, before a judge whose voice was fame.

> "And, when he heard the music that I made,
> He found himself full greatly pleased at it:
> He gan to cast great liking to my lore,
> And great disliking to *my luckless lot*,
> *That banished had myself, like wight forlore,*
> *Into that waste where I was quite forgot.*"

Spenser has here disclosed involuntarily "the secret sorrow."

The acres of Kilcolman offered no delights to "the wight forlore, forgotten in that waste." Our tender and melancholy poet was not blessed with that fortitude, which, even in a barren solitude, can muse on its own glory, as Petrarch and Rousseau were wont, and which knows also to value a repose freed from spiteful rivalries and mordacious malignity. And now opened his tedious suings at court; for what, but to obtain some situation in his native home, which offered repose of mind, and carelessness of the future? We know of his restless wanderings to England, and his constant returns to Ireland. We find the poet, in 1590, wearied by solicitations, throwing out the immortal lines so painfully descriptive of—

> "What hell it is in suing long to bide."

It was in this year that the first three books of the romantic epic were published; which was followed by the grant of a pension in February, 1591. But, five years afterwards, the poet still remains the same querulous court-suitor; the mise-

and sword, consisted of tenantless farms and a wasted soil. Sir Walter Rawleigh had a grant of twelve thousand acres, which he probably found profitless; for he made them over at a low rate to the Boyle Family.

rable man wasting his days and his nights: for then he tells us, in his "Prothalamion," how on a summer's day he —

> "Walked forth, to ease his pain,
> Along the shore of silver-streaming Thames.
> ——————I whose sullen care,
> Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
> In princes' court, and expectation vain
> Of idle hopes which still do fly away,
> Like empty shadows, to afflict my brain."

When this was written, Spenser had possessed the lands of Kilcolman more than ten years, and held his pension. Were the lands profitless, and the pension still to be solicited? The poet has only perpetuated his "secret sorrows:" his pride or his delicacy has thrown a veil over them. He has sent down to posterity his disappointments, without alluding to the nature of his claims.

It was in 1597 that Spenser laid before the queen his memorable "View of the State of Ireland." This state memorial still makes us regret that our poet only wrote verse: there is a charm in his sweet and voluble prose, a virgin grace which we have long lost in the artificial splendor of English diction. Here is no affectation of Chaucerian words: the gold is not spotted with rust. The vivid pictures of the poet, the curiosity of the antiquary, and, above all, a new model of policy of the practical politician, combine in this inestimable tract. Spenser suggested that the popular hero of that day, his noble friend the Earl of Essex, would be more able to conciliate popular favor in Ireland. By an alternate policy, from that day to the present, has our government tried to rule that fair "Land of Ire," either by a Lord Grey's severity of justice, — the Arthegal, accompanied by his "iron man" with his "iron flail;" or by the generous graciousness of an Earl of Essex, courting popularity: but neither would serve; the more quiet wisdom lay in colonization, happily begun, and so fatally neglected. The powerful eloquence of the poet and

the secretary attracted the queen's attention. She recommended Spenser to the Irish Council to be Sheriff of Cork; again was "the wight forlore" sent back to his undesired locality: yet now, perhaps, honors and promotion were awaiting the "miserable man." The royal letter was dated in September; and in the following month, suddenly, the Irish insurrection broke out. The flight of Spenser and his family from the Castle of Kilcolman was momentous: perhaps they witnessed the flames annihilating their small wealth. Spenser himself lost more than wealth: for the father beheld the sacrifice of his child; and the author was bereaved of all his manuscripts, now lost or scattered, — his hopes, his pride, and his fame! He flew to England, not to live, but to experience how this last stroke of fortune went beyond the force of his own passionate descriptions, or of his nature to endure. In an obscure lodging, and within three short months, the most sensitive of men, broken-hearted, closed his eyes in mute grief, and in a premature death. Spenser perished at the zenith of human life.

Curiosity has been excited to learn the occasion of the inveterate prejudice of an insensible lord-treasurer against a tender poet who had courted his favor. This hostility of "the mighty peer" seems not to have broken forth openly till the publication of the first three books of the "Faery Queen;" for all the poet's personal allusions to Burleigh were written shortly after that event.

Can so small a creature as a poet, when it creeps into the sphere of a jealous statesman's policy, draw on itself his hateful attention? Are crafty politicians in office like richly-laden travellers who start at a crossing shadow? Burleigh possessed the full confidence of his sovereign from her youth; but she was a woman subject to caprices, and would call her ancient friend and servant "an old fool." Burleigh was fearfully jealous of two potent rivals, — the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Essex: these "men of arms," the patrons of Spenser, were

each subsequently the head of the opposition to the pacific administration of the lord-treasurer.

"The sage old sire," moreover, well knew the romantic self-idolatry of his royal mistress; her infirmity of poetical susceptibility; her avidity of poignant flatteries on her beauty, her chastity, and even on her verse. Her majesty was now in the ascension of that glorified beatitude, the "Faery Queen;" and this transfiguration was the work of him whom he held to be a creature of his great rivals!

We are interested to detect the vacillating conduct of the poet to the implacable statesman. Spenser accompanied his presentation-copy of the "Faery Queen" to the lord-treasurer with a sonnet, in which he humiliated the Muse before his great court-enemy:—

> "On whose mighty shoulders most doth rest
> The burden of this kingdom's government,
> Unfitly I these idle rimes present,
> The labor of lost time and wit unstayed."

If Spenser had complained of former cold neglect, now he had to endure, what a poet can never forgive, bitter disdain.

Wounded in spirit, the poet composed, immediately after the first appearance of the "Faery Queen," "the Ruins of Time:" there, eulogizing the departed Sir Francis Walsingham for his love of learning, and care of "men of arms," he launches forth a thunderbolt against the wary and frigid Burleigh:—

> "For he that now wields all things at his will
> Scorns one and the other in his deeper skill."

And he repeats the accusation in "Mother Hubbard's Tale:"—

> "Oh, grief of griefs! oh, gall of all good hearts!
> To see that virtue should despised be
> Of him that first was raised for vertuous parts;
> And now, broad-spreading like an aged tree,
> Lets none shoot up that nigh him planted be.
> Oh! let the man, by whom the Muse is scorned,
> Nor alive nor dead be of the Muse adorned."

We have, too, a more finished portrait of an evil *minister* who "lifted up his lofty towers," —

"That they begin to threat the neighbor sky;" —

in which, unquestionably, we find some of the deformities of Burleigh's political physiognomy.

"He no count made of nobility, —
The realm's chief strength, and girlond of the crown:
He made them dwell in darkness of disgrace;
For none but whom he list might come in place.
Of men of armes he had but small regard,
But kept them low, and strained very hard.
For men of learning little he esteemed:
His wisdome he above their learning deemed.
As for the rascal commons least he cared;
For not so common was his bounty shared.
'Let God,' said he, 'if please, care for the manie:
I for myself most care before else anie.'
Yet none durst speak, ne none durst of him plaine,
So great he was in grace, and rich through gaine."

The gentle bard of the "Faery Queen" now sate down to continue his great work; but, haunted by this spectral and iron-eyed monster of an unpatronizing minister, he actually violates the solemnity of his theme by opening with another recollection, so fatal to his own repose: —

"The rugged forehead, that, with grave foresight,
Welds kingdoms, causes, and affairs of state,
My looser rimes I wote doth sharply wite,
For praising love as I have done of late.
Such ones ill judge of love. that cannot love,
Ne in their frozen heart feel kindly flame."

But the minister could not banish him from the sovereign: —

"To such, therefore, I do not sing at all,
But to that sacred saint, my sovereign queen:
To her I sing of love, that loveth best,
And best is loved."

About the same time, Spenser had written "the Tears of the Muses," where, expressing a poet's wish that the royal palaces of Eliza should be filled with —

"Praises of divinest wits,
Who her eternize with their heavenly writs," —

I suspect that Burleigh figures again among —

"The salvage brood,
Who, having been with acorns always fed,
Can no whit cherish this celestial food;
But with base thoughts are unto blindness led,
And kept from looking on the lightsome day."

After these indignant effusions, Spenser, in proceeding with the "Faery Queen," tergiversated in his feelings. The poet had shadowed with some tenderness the calamities of the Scottish Mary, in the gentle characters of Amoret and Florizel. Yielding to political changes, the Queen of Scots is suddenly horribly transformed into the false Duessa. For the honor of the poet, we may concede that he partook of those party-passions which great statesmen know to raise up at will, and which never fail to influence contemporaries. Burleigh never paused till he laid the head of Mary on the block.* In the fifth book of the "Faery Queen," the poet has exhibited the trial of this state victim, and has made her sister-sovereign gracefully conceal tears which possibly were never shed; but who could expect that "the rugged forehead" — him whom he had denounced, that, "alive or dead," should by "the Muse be ever scorned" — should appear with all the dignity of wisdom?

"The sage old sire, that had to name
The kingdom's care, with a white silver head,
That many high regards and reasons 'gainst her read."

The poet did worse as he advanced in his work; for, in the

* I have been favored with the sight of several manuscript letters of Burleigh, in the possession of a gentleman in the neighborhood of Taunton, which relate to this critical period. They remarkably display the eager and remorseless decision of Burleigh. Messengers were sent off three or four times in a day, countermanding the former command, as the mind of Elizabeth vacillated, disconcerting the plans of the minister. The order "to cut off her head" is given with the most revolting minuteness.

sixth book, he absolutely denies that it was his intention, in any of his "former writs," to reflect on "this mighty peer." To what "former writs" Spenser alludes is not clear. The matchless picture of the fruitless days of a court-expectant, in "Mother Hubbard's Tale," which many of my readers may have by heart, is supposed to have been represented to Lord Burleigh, by "backbiters," as a censure on him: it was an immortal one! and the application was easy.

It was after the appearance of the "Faery Queen," that Elizabeth, economical as were her bounties, sealed her delight by a permanent pension. Was it on this occasion that the remonstrance of the prudential lord-treasurer diminished by half its amount? "All this for a song!" exclaimed Burleigh. "Then give him what is reason," rejoined the queen. The words were remembered by the bard; but the royal command lay neglected at the exchequer. On a progress, Spenser reminded her majesty, by a petition, in the smallest space that ever suitor presented one, and in a style of which it was not easy to forget a word.* The lord-treasurer got reprimanded,

* This petition in rhyme is well known:—

"I was promised, on a time,
To have reason for my rhime:
From that time unto this season,
I received nor rhime nor reason."

Mr. Todd deems the anecdote apocryphal, because he can only retrace it to Fuller, who published it seventy years after the incident recorded, assigning no authority. Honest Fuller has, however, given a tolerable authority for such a sort of thing; namely, that it was "a story commonly *told* and *believed*." There could be no motive for any one to invent the circumstance and the pleasantry, gratuitously to ascribe it to the poet. Mr. Todd is pleased to call "the numbers magical," and decides on this "ridiculous memorial,"—a criticism fatal to all the playfulness of genius. Were the "rhimes" not good enough for the nonce? and "the reason" amusingly convenient to be remembered?

The anecdote is only deficient in its date, and possibly may relate to some former donation before the pension was fixed. Edward Phillips gives the large sum of five hundred pounds,—another version of the same story; and he wrote about the same time. What remains inexplicable is, that this pen-

and the poet present payment. We cannot avoid associating the anecdote with these lines:—

> "To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peer's;
> To have thy asking, yet wait many years."

We may now close with Burleigh; but much remains to be developed in the fortunes of a court-suitor, as we trace them in the history of our Spenser. The coldness of the lord-treasurer may not have been the only cause of the poet's deep and constant laments. The sojourner in the circle of a court may be mortified not only by its repulse or its neglect, but also by the capricious favor of his patron. A devotion of service may provoke offence, whether it be from zeal too improvident, from officiousness too busy, or from an ingenuousness too open. He is thrown into a position in which he must preserve silence, and cannot always hope for pardon.

One incident of this nature deeply affected our poet in his intercourse with Lord Leicester. We only discover it by a remarkable dedicatory sonnet to his translation of Virgil's "Gnat." Had the poet not decided that the mysterious tale should reach posterity, he would not have published the sonnet several years after it was composed; for it is dedicated "to the deceased lord"! The poet has energetically described the delicacy and difficulty of the position into which he had been cast:—

> "*Wronged, yet not daring to express my pain*
> To you, good lord! the causer of my care,
> In cloudy tears my case *I thus complain*
> *Unto yourself, that only privy are.*
> But if that any Œdipus, unware,
> Shall chance, through power of some divining spright,
> To read *the secret of this riddle rare*,

---

sion to Spenser seems to have been wholly unknown to his contemporaries — to Camden and to others — who wrote subsequently. The grant of this pension was only discovered a few years ago in the Chapel of the Rolls. The pension was only for fifty pounds; but the value of money makes the royal gift more decent than at first it would seem.

And know the purport of my evil plight;
Let him rest pleased with his own insight,
Ne further seek to gloze upon the text:
But grief enough it is to grieved wight,
To feel his fault, and not be further vext.
But what so by myself may not be shown,
May by this gnat's complaint be easily known."

The gnat of Virgil, observing a serpent in the act of darting on a sleeping swain, stings the eye of the sleeper: starting at the pain, the disturbed man crushes the gnat; but, thus awakened, he saves himself from the crested serpent. The poem turns on the remonstrance of the ghost of the gnat; which had no other means than by inflicting its friendly sting to warn him of his peril who had thus hastily deprived it of its own innocent existence. What was "the serpent," and why the poet was hardly used as "the gnat," and why he was —

"Wronged, yet not daring to express his pain," —

and yet "grieved to feel *his fault*," is "a riddle rare," supposed to require some Œdipus of secret history to solve. The moral is obvious. The character of the royal favorite may give rise to many suggestions; but, if I may venture a conjecture on what the parties themselves "were only privy to," Spenser had touched on some high matter, where his affectionate zeal, however sagacious, on this occasion hurt the pride of Leicester, too haughty or too mortified to be lessoned by his familiar dependant, who, like the gnat, found that his timely warning was "his fault."

A sage of the antiquarian school imagined that he could solve the enigma of Spenser's sorrows, by arranging, with dates, and accounts of salaries, the official situations which the poet held. To remove the odium attached to Burleigh's prepossessions against the poet, he assumes, that, without the lord-treasurer's consent, Spenser could not have received his lands or his pensions. But the royal grant of the forfeited lands was obviously the reward for his conduct, suggested by those under

whose eye he had served: the patronage of Sidney and the Lords Leicester and Grey may be imagined to have greatly outweighed any cavils of Burleigh. George Chalmers infers that all the complaints of the poet are "too highly colored, *if they really were complaints respecting himself;*" and concludes that all the poet's querulousness must be ascribed, not to Burleigh, but to the Irish Rebellion. But the calamity of the Irish Rebellion occasioned no complaints from the poet,—only his death! for we have not a line by Spenser during the short interval which elapsed between his flight from Ireland and his decease in London.

It was not by an estimate of salaries and an arrangement of dates, which yield no result, but by a statement of feelings, in which the "secret sorrows" of Spenser lie concealed, that we can decide on the real source of his continued complaints. The poet must be judged by the habits of his mind, and by those interior conflicts which are often unconnected with those external circumstances open to common observers. Of all the tuneful train, Spenser was the most poetical in the gentlest attributes of the poet. That robust force which the enterprise of active life demands was not lodged in that soul of tenderness; and worldly cares, like that cancer in the breast which the sufferer hides from others, dejected the fancy which at all times was working ceaselessly among its bright creations. His vein was inexhaustible; and we have lost, perhaps, more than we possess of his writings. The author of "the Faery Queen" required, above all things, leisure and the muse. His first steppings into life were auspicious. To Sir Philip Sidney he had opened the first cantos of his romantic epic: the catastrophe of that poet-hero made our poet a mourner all his days. There was no substitute for a congenial patron: all other patrons could be but the very statues of patronage, cold representatives of the departed, but no longer the bosom companion of the poet's thoughts, and the generous arbiter of his fortunes.

In his last days, Spenser has not dropped even one "melodious tear;" but he was wept by his brothers the poets, who held his pall, and bestrewed his hearse with their elegies, and beheld in the fate of their great master their own. And thus truly, though ambiguously, Phineas Fletcher described his destiny:—

"Poorly, poor man! he lived; poorly, poor man! he died."

So many living details of that golden bondage into which our poet was thrown, from his earliest to his latter days, discover the real source of his "secret sorrows,"—his unceasing and vain solicitation at court, the suitor of so many patrons: the *res angusta domi* perpetually pressed on the morbid imagination of the fortuneless man.

I know of no satire aimed at SPENSER; a singular fate for a great poet: even "satyric Nash" revered the character of the author of "the Faery Queen." I have often thought, that, among the numerous critics of SPENSER, the truest was his keen and witty contemporary; for this town-wit has stamped all our poet's excellences by one felicitous word,—"HEAVENLY SPENSER."

THE FAERY QUEEN.

SPENSER, the courtly spectator of the tilt, the pageant, and the mask,—musing over the tome of old Gothic romances, and striking into the vein of fabling of Italian poesy, whose novelty had nearly supplanted the ancient classics,—was at once ARIOSTO and TASSO and OVID.

SPENSER composed with great facility: incessant production seems to have been his true existence. His was one of those minds whose labor diffuses their delight, and whose delight provokes to labor. He seems always to be in earnest, and sometimes in haste; for he had much to work. While composing the "Faery Queen," he had that concurrent poem of the regal Arthur, of no inferior *calibre*, ever in his mind. The "Faery Queen" would have contained, had it been completed, not much under a hundred thousand verses. The "Iliad" does not exceed fifteen. He seems to have been satisfied with his first unblotted thoughts. He has defects which might have proved fatal to an ordinary versifier; but his voluminous vein lies protected by his genius.

The artificial complexity of his nine-lined stanza put him to many shifts; he exercised arbitrary power in shortening words or lengthening syllables; and hardily invented novel terminations to common words, to provide his multiplicity of rhymes: he falsified accentuation, to adapt it to his metre; and violated the orthography, to adjust the rhyme: he dilated his thoughts to fill up the measure of his stanza; and we are too often reminded of the hammering of the chain. The first book of the "Faery Queen," when the difficulties of

this novel stanza must have been most arduous, is necessarily composed with most care; and, both for subject and execution, is of itself a complete poem. As Spenser acquired facility and dexterity, his pen winged its flight through the prescribed labyrinth of sweet sounds.

His exquisite ear had felt the melody of the vowelly and voluble stanza of Italy; and to which he even added a grace of his own by a new measure, in the Alexandrine close. This verse had been introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt with no great effect: it was adroitly adopted by Spenser to give a full cadence to his stanza. Dryden, in its occasional use, professedly derived it from Spenser, and seems to have carried away the honor, when Pope, in exemplifying its solemn effect, ascribes it to the latter poet, who, he tells us, had taught —

"The full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine."

The inanity of that race —

"Of gentlemen who wrote with ease," —

and made such free use of "the full-resounding line," void of all thought, only betrayed their barrenness by this additional extension of their weakness. Hence it incurred the partial censure of our great poetical critic, as "a needless Alexandrine," —

"That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along."

But the soul of melody lies hidden in the musician's instrument; and the Spenserian stanza, to be felt, must find its echo in the ear of the reader. A master in the art of versification was struck by our poet's modulation, so musical was his ear in the rhythm of his verse. He remarked this in those two delicious pieces, — "the Prothalamion," a spousal hymn on the double marriage of two ladies, personated as two swans in these harmonious lines, —

"Two swans of goodly hue
Came softly swimming down along the Lee;" * —

and "the Epithalamium" on the poet's own nuptials, or, as the poet notes, —

"Song made in lieu of many ornaments
With which my love should duely have been decked."

One feature in Spenser's versification seems to have escaped notice, although Warton has expressly written a dissertation on that subject. It is Spenser's discreet use of *alliteration:* never obtrusive, but falling naturally into the verse, it may escape our perception while it is acting on our feeling. Unconsciously or by habit, his ear became the echo of his imagination: sound was the response of thought, and, as much as his epithets, scattered the "orient hues" of his fancy. Alliteration and epithets, which with mechanical versificators are a mere artifice, because only an artifice, and glare and glitter, charm by their consonance when they rise out of the emotions of the true poet.†

Some persons have been deterred from venturing on the "Faery Queen" from a notion that the style had rusted with

* The Lee is the stream.

† I offer some instances of alliteration; but the beauty of such lines can only be rightly judged by the context: —

"In woods, in waves, in wars, she wonts to dwell;
And will be found with peril and with pain."

"Such as a lamp whose life does fade away,
Or as the moon clothed with cloudy night."

"A world of waters,
Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse cry."

"They cherelle chaunt, and rymes at random flung,
The fruitful spawn of their rank fantasies:
They feed the ears of fools with flattery."

"All the day, before the sunny rays,
He used to slug or sleep, in slothful shade."

"Unpitied, unplagued, of foe or friend."

"And with sharp shrilling shriek do bootless cry."

"Did stand astonished at his curious skill,
With hungry ears to hear his harmony."

time, and is as obsolete as chivalry itself. This popular prejudice has been fostered by an opinion of Ben Jonson, which probably referred chiefly to "the Shepherd's Calendar," where Spenser had adopted a system of Chaucerian words, which to us is more curious than fortunate, and which, on the first publication, required a glossary. This system he abandoned in his romantic epic: but he loved to sprinkle some remaining graces of antiquity, some *naïve* expressions, or some picturesque words; and his modern imitators, amid their elaborate pomp, have felt the secret charm, and have mottled their Spenserian stanza with these archaisms.

Of all poets, SPENSER excelled in the pictorial faculty. His circumstantial descriptions are minute, yet vivid. They are, indeed, exuberant; for he loved not to quit his work while he could bring the object closer to the eye. This diffusion, flowing with the melody of his verse, often raises the illusion of revery, till we seem startled by reality, and we appear to have beheld what only we have been told.* Poet of poets! SPENSER made a poet at once of COWLEY, and

* Spenser has suffered a criticism from Mr. Campbell, who, a great poet himself, has otherwise done ample justice to his ancient master. "It must certainly be owned, that, in description, he exhibits nothing of the *brief strokes* and *robust power* which characterize the *very greatest poets*." Certain it is, Spenser is rarely "brief and robust;" but contrary natures cannot operate in the same genius. If Spenser rarely shows the strength and brevity of "the very greatest poets," so may it be said that "the very greatest poets" rarely rival the charm of his diffusion; or, as Mr. Campbell himself attests, in "verse more magnificently descriptive." But the voice of Poetry is more potent than its criticism; and truly says Mr. Campbell, "We shall nowhere find more airy and expansive images of visionary things, a sweeter tone of sentiment, or a finer flush in the color of language, than in this RUBENS OF ENGLISH POETRY."

Twining was a scholar, deeply versed in classical lore, which he has shown to great advantage in his "Version of and Commentary on Aristotle's Treatise of Poetry." In his Dissertations "On Poetical and Musical Imitation" prefixed to this work, our critic is quite at home with Pope and Goldsmith; but he seems wholly shut out from Spenser! In a note to his first Dissertation, he tells us "the following stanza of SPENSER has been much admired:"—

once lent an elegant simplicity to THOMSON. GRAY was accustomed to open Spenser when he would frame —

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn;"

and MILTON, who owned Spenser to have been his master as well as his predecessor, lingered amid his musings, and, with many a Spenserian image, touched into perfection his own sublimity.

In associating the name of SPENSER with MILTON and GRAY, we are reminded of the distinctness of his poetic

"The joyous birds shrouded in chearful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempred sweet;
The angelical soft trembling voices made
To the instruments divine respondence meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmurs of the waters-fall;
The waters-fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle-warbling wind low answered to all.[1]

Our critic observes that Dr. Warton says of these lines, that "they are of themselves a complete concert of the most delicious music." Indeed, this very stanza in Spenser has been celebrated long before Joseph Warton wrote, and often since. Now listen to our learned Twining: —

"It is unwillingly that I differ from a person of so much taste. I cannot consider as music, much less as 'delicious music,' a mixture of incompatible sounds, — of sounds musical with sounds unmusical. The singing of birds cannot possibly be 'attempered' to the notes of a human voice. The mixture is, and must be, disagreeable. To a person listening to a concert of voices and instruments, the interruption of singing-birds, wind, and waterfalls, would be little better than the torment of Hogarth's enraged musician. Further, the description itself is, like too many of Spenser's, coldly elaborate, and indiscriminately minute. Of the expressions, some are feeble and without effect, as 'joyous birds;' some evidently improper, as 'trembling voices' and 'cheerful shades,' — for there cannot be a greater fault in a voice than to be tremulous, and cheerful is surely an unhappy epithet applied to shade; some cold and labored, and such as betray too plainly the necessities of rhyme, — such is —

'The waters-fall with difference discreet.'"

Such is the anti-poetical and technical criticism! Imagine a music-master, who had never read a line of poetry, attempting to perform the

[1] "The Faery Queen," book ii. canto xii. st. 71.

faculty, and the difference of his personal character. Spenser, tender, elegant, and fanciful, rarely participated in their condensed energies, or the severity of their greatness: the personal character of our courtly poet was moulded by his position in society.

When we float along the stream of his melodious song, conscious only of its beauty, we do not often pause at elevations which raise the feeling of the sublime. Such daring visions, when they do rise on us, rather indicate the power of his genius than the habit of his mind. Our gentle Spenser was often satisfied with rivalling without surpassing his originals, which Milton and Gray ever did when they copied. It seems, therefore, unreasonable to assert that Spenser has combined the daring sternness of Dante with the wild fantasy of Goethe.

"delicious music" of our poet; or a singing-master, who had never heard a "joyous bird," tuning up some fair pupil's "trembling voice,"—and we might have expected this criticism from such "enraged musicians"! Would our critic insist on having a philharmonic concert or a simple sonata?—he who will not suffer birds to be "joyous," nor "the shade cheerful," which their notes make so.

> "The angelical soft trembling voices made
> To the instruments divine respondence meet,"—

the "softness trembling" with the verse: had our critic forgotten Strada's famed contest of the nightingale with the lyre of the poet, when, her "trembling voice" overcome in the rivalry, she fell on the strings to die? And what shall we think of the classical critic who has pronounced that "the descriptions of Spenser are coldly elaborate,"—the most vivid and splendid of our poetry?

But the most curious part remains to be told. This fine stanza of Spenser is one of his free borrowings; being a translation of a stanza in Tasso,[1] excepting the introduction of "the silver-sounding instruments." The Æolian harp played on by the musical winds was a happiness reserved for Thomson. The felicitous copy of Spenser attracted Fairfax, who, when he came to the passage in Tasso, kept his eye on Spenser, and has carefully retained "the joyous birds" for the *vezzosi augelli* of the original.

It is certain, that, without poetic sensibility, the most learned critic will ever find that the utmost force of his logic in these matters will not lead to reason, but to unreason. Imagination only can decide on imagination.

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[1] "Gerusalemme Liberata," canto xvi st. 12.

Yet their lofty creations have not gone beyond those of Spenser's personifications of Despair; of Fear; of Confusion; of Astonishment; of laborious Care, — that workman in his smithy, living amid the unceasing strokes of his perpetual hammers; or of Jealousy, from a mortal man metamorphosed with Ovidean fancy: his single eye, for he had long worn out the other, never could be closed; no slumber could press down those restless lids; tenant of a cavern, listening day and night to the roaring billows incessantly beating his abode, threatening with its huge ruins to fall on the wretch wasting in self-torments, till, nothing left of him, he vanished into a flitting aery sprite, —

> "Forgot he was a man, and JEALOUSY is hight." *

There are two sublime descriptions of NIGHT, which may be read together. In the one she is the —

> "Sister of heavie Death, and nurse of Woes!"

and elsewhere she appears as —

> "That most ancient Grandmother of all, —
> Older than Jove."

NIGHT, befriending Deceit and Shame, takes one of their daughters, the witch Duessa, in her "pitchy mantle." Yoking her coal-black steeds to her iron wagon, they penetrate to the inferior regions, bearing a mortal caitiff to be *restored* to this wicked life: "the messenger of death" passing over the earth, the screeching owl, the baying dogs, the howling wolf, warn of the witch's presence; and in hell the trembling ghosts stand —

> "Chattering with iron teeth, and staring wide
> With stonie eyes; and flocked on every side
> To gaze on EARTHLY WIGHT that with the NIGHT durst ride." †

The sublime fragment on "Mutability," where Nature is

* "The Faery Queen," book iii. canto x.
† "The Faery Queen," b. iii. canto iv. st. 65, and b. i. canto v. st. 20.

viewed seated mysteriously amid the creation, has not been excelled by the most philosophical poets.

> "Great Nature ever young, yet full of eld,
> Still moving, yet immoved from her sted;
> Unseen of any, yet of all beheld,
> Thus sitting on her throne."

If such noble inventions appear rare, it perhaps is owing to the wide extent of the "faery land," as well as to the poet's proneness to luxuriance of diction. If from that voluminous inspiration the poet has sometimes trespassed on the critic's bourn, or the romantic eulogist of chastity itself has sometimes violated his own virgin page,—for Spenser, always imitative, caught a slight infection from his old romancers and his Italian favorites,—all this exuberance bears fruit: freedom and force will ever interest the artists of poetry.

Whoever has passed into the house of Pride, —

> "Whose walls were high, but nothing strong nor thick," —

and marked her on her progress, "drawn by six unequal beasts," with her vile counsellors in their wicked gradation; or has entered "the ancient house of Holiness;" or counted, in the den of Riches, —

> "The huge great iron chests and coffers strong," —

amid the dead men's bones scattered around those chests and coffers, — has realized the marvellous architecture of Fancy; or whoever, roving with the Muse of Spenser through all her localities, meets the sylvan men whom the chaste Una governed, or the satyrs whom the frail Hellenore would not quit; or, when that Muse unveils her voluptuous charms, listens to her song in the enchanted gardens of Armida; or, in the approach to Acrasia in the bower of Bliss, starts at the nymphs wantonly wrestling in the glassy waters, laughing and blushing; or more innocently gazes on the gorgeous Mask of Cupid, or the dance of the poet and mistress among the Graces, — finds all endowed with poetic existences, unchange-

able in their nature amid the changes of taste, so long as imagination shall seek for its delights, and genius for the language of its emotions.

"The Faery Queen" was designed by its author to consist of twelve books; six of which we only possess, published at two several times, and a fragment of another. The subject of each book is a moral attribute, — Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy. Each attribute is personified by a knight-errant, with all the passions of bodily mortality.

The plan of the poem is so inartificial, that the twelve books, had it been completed, could only have formed twelve separate poems: our poet followed the free and fertile way of Ariosto. The introduction of Prince Arthur may have been designed to give a sort of unity to the incoherent twelve knights, who would have been finally led under his auspices to the court of the Faery Queen; but as the prince, however respectable in romance, comes and vanishes, does nothing, and says little, we incline to the humor of the editor, Hughes, that "the prince is here seen only in his minority, performing his exercises in Fairyland as a *private gentleman*." The versatile plan was adapted to the genius of the poet: the ductility of his invention, the luxuriance of his imagination, and the never-ceasing flow of his mellifluous stanza, would have suffered constraint and mutilation, bound by prescribed forms, and modelled by the classical epic. At the period that the poet Hughes published his edition* of Spenser, our editors and critics were little conversant with the Elizabethan literature; nor had the taste of the learned emancipated itself from the established form of the epic of antiquity. But Hughes was alive to the vital poetry before him, though evidently perplexed to fix on a criterion, or to specify the class of poetry, for "the Faery Queen." His excellent judgment

* This edition of 1715, from its modernized orthography, and from greater freedoms taken with the text, is valueless.

struck into a new and right path. He describes it as "a poem of a particular kind;" and, in his "Remarks on the Faery Queen," he had the merit of distinguishing poetry, like architecture, into its Gothic origin, as well as its classical. This was a discovery at that period; and subsequent critics, such as Bishop Hurd, and more recently Schlegel, have run away with the honor by their more ample development of the romantic school. Hughes was hardly aware of the importance of this division; for his discovery amounts to little more than one of those first thoughts, which have not ripened into a principle.

"The Faery Queen" was the last great work modelled on chivalry. Awakening from the gloom of the theological contests of Edward and Mary, the court of the Maiden Queen, from state-policy and her own disposition, had been transformed into a court of romance. Glory was the cheap but inappreciable meed bestowed by the economical sovereign; and love was the language to which the female from the throne could bend to listen to her subject.

Elizabeth, stately and tender, was herself "the Faery Queen," without even the poet's flattery, when seated under the dais, amid long galleries hung with cloth of gold or silver, and all the moving tilt-yard glittering in its shine; "the noise of music," and the sound of shields; the solemn procession, and gay crowd of the many-colored liveries; the tasselled caparisons of the horses, and the nodding plumes of the knights. There our poet fed his eyes on the pageant, enchanting by its scenical allegory: as when four noble challengers approached, — the children of DESIRE, — attempting to win the fortress of BEAUTY; that is, Whitehall and her majesty!* They stand in a car, "shadowed with white and carnation silk, being the colors of Desire." But the challengers must yield to Beauty, whose princely voice is their ample

* This famous tourney may be viewed in Holinshed, — "England," 1317, fo. The four illustrious challengers were the Earl of Arundel, Lord Windsor, Sir Fulke Greville, and Sir Philip Sidney.

guerdon; and on the following day were the tourney and the barriers "courageously tried." Thus were the days of chivalry, in its forms or its "fopperies," restored by the Faery Queen; and, with such festivals, SPENSER nursed his gorgeous fancy, and the queen was the true inspirer of his romantic epic.

Warton and Hurd observe that Spenser copied real *manners of his time* as much as Homer. We must here distinguish an essential difference, if Homer really represented the manners of the heroic age. It is true, that much of the *manners* and forms of chivalry prevailed among the courtiers of Elizabeth; but such *adventures* of chivalry as Spenser has described in his singular poem were transplanted from the ancient romances. The *incidents* are therefore not of the poet's age; and we can only read his narrative as the last of the romances.

The old romance of "La Morte d'Arthur" was still the fashionable reading of the court; nor had the gorgeous enchantments of Stephen Hawes yet vanished, for a new edition had issued in 1555. Spenser had read Hawes; and, however entranced by the pageantry of the fiction, from the uncouth stanza of "the Pastime of Pleasure" he may have been led to the construction of the Spenserian; for it is one of the aptitudes of true genius to carry to perfection what it finds imperfect.

"The Faery Queen" was produced at a crisis of transition when the old romantic way was departing, notwithstanding the temporary influence of a courtly revival, and the new had not yet arrived. The whole machinery of Gothic invention could hardly be worked: its marvels had ceased to be wondrous, and began to be ridiculed. The fantastic extravagance of the ordinary writers of fiction — that crowd of poet-apes which always rise after a great work has appeared — has been censured by the two great literary satirists of that day, MARSTON and HALL: Hall, indeed, suddenly checks his

censorial temerity in blaming themes made sacred by the Faery Muse.

> "Let no rebel satire dare traduce
> The eternal legends of thy fairy Muse,
> Renowned SPENSER! whom no earthly wight
> Dares once to emulate."

The compliment to Spenser does not diminish the satire levelled at the class.

Contemporary satirists furnish a precise date when ancient things are on the turn, and getting out of fashion: they are the first, who, like hawks, descend on their quarry.

If Spenser attempted to infuse a rejuvenescence into the dry veins of the old age of romance by the vitality of *Allegory*, he has fallen into a great error; for his twelve knight-errants do not interest our sympathies the more for being twelve wandering virtues. Allegorical poetry, not long after his day, also declined; and when it was resumed by PHINEAS FLETCHER in what he has fantastically named and described as "the Purple Island," or "the little ISLE OF MAN," the poetry can hardly preserve itself amid the ludicrous analogies which, with such ingenious perversity of taste, are struck out between anatomy and poesy, too many not very agreeable to recollect.

CHIVALRY and ALLEGORY, two columns of our poet's renown, thus soon gave way; and SPENSER has often suffered the heaviest penalty to which a great poet was ever condemned, — neglect!

But these infelicitous forms, which disguised the most tender and imaginative genius, could not deprive it of its "better parts." Spenser still remained the poet among poets themselves; though for the world at large, indeed, Spenser seemed to be recognized only as a poet in the chronology of poetry. A critic of great delicacy, and a votary of "the Gothic school," despaired for the destiny of our poet. "The Faery Queen," exclaimed HURD in the agony of his taste, "one of

the noblest productions of modern poetry, is fallen into so general a neglect, that all the zeal of the commentators is esteemed officious and impertinent, and will never restore it to those honors which it has, once for all, irrecoverably lost."

This sharp lament broke out in 1760, when, only two years before, the two rival editions of CHURCH and UPTON had simultaneously appeared; and the latter could at least boast both of the novelty and the curiosity of its commentary. But literary commentators held forth few attractions to the incurious readers of that day. More than thirty years have now elapsed since the last classical edition of Spenser's works. But at no period was Spenser ever forgotten by poetical recluses; and professed imitations of our poet in modern times, though they may not always be Spenserian, have never ceased, from Shenstone to Mickle, and from Beattie to Byron.

ALLEGORY.

ALLEGORY, and its exposition of what is termed the double or secret sense, is a topic on more than one account important. The mystical art of types and symbols has given rise to some extraordinary abuses, and even to artifices, which may be considered as an imposture practised on the human understanding. An extended fictitious narrative, constructed on the principle of one continued allegory, is a topic which critical learning has not expressly treated on. An allegorical epic never occured to the ancient legislator of poetry; and modern critics have consented to define ALLEGORY as "that art in which one thing is *related*, and another *understood*."

But it has been subsequently discovered that this definition was too narrow to comprehend the multiform shapes which allegory assumes, either in the subtility or the grossness of its nature.

Licentious commentators have rioted in their presumed discoveries by extorting from the apparent meaning a hidden sense, or by typical adumbrations wresting allusions to persons or circumstances. The genius of allegory has triumphed from an extended metaphor to a whole poem itself; and its chimerical results have often resembled the metamorphoses of Ovid, turning every object into an altered shape, and making two objects, wholly unconnected, appear to rise out of each other. We may show from the success of many of these pretended revelations, that the difficulty has not always been so great as the absurdity.

A prevalent folly has usually some parent-origin; and the present one of ALLEGORY may have been an ancient one. The learned have sought for the source of allegory in the night of Egyptian darkness, among their hieroglyphics. That curious tale of antiquity which Herodotus has preserved shows us all the obscurity and the inconvenience of allegorical communication in its ambidextrous nature. The four symbols — of the arrows, the bird, the mouse, and the frog, which the Scythian ambassadors silently presented to Darius on his invasion of their deserts — were an allegory; and, like many allegories, this emblematical embassy admitted of contrary interpretations. This enigmatic humor of the Egyptian learning seems to have been caught by the emblematical Greeks. The priesthood, eager to save the divinity of their whole theogony from the popular traditions and poetical impieties of that bible of the Polytheists, the "Iliad," opened the secret or double sense of Homer. They maintained that the Homeric fables were nothing less than an allegory, shadowing forth the mysteries of nature, and veiling an arcanum of the sciences physical and moral. And these elucidators of speculative obscurities formed a sect under the lower Platonists.* The fathers were perfect children in their ridiculous allegories, and they allegorized the Old Testament throughout; and assuredly the rabbins did not yield in puerility to the fathers. But all these were on topics too solemn to enter into our present inquiry.

We may, however, smile when we discover this race of Œdipuses among the *romanzatori*, or the publishers of the ancient romances. With solemn effrontery, these proceeded on the principle of allegory to dignify their light and lying volumes, either to renovate the satiated curiosity of their readers, to cover the freedom of their prurient incidents, or to

* We have a collection of these "Allegoricæ Homericæ." Even the great Verulam caught the infectious ingenuity, and, in "the Wisdom of the Ancients," explains every thing with the skill of a great Homeric scholiast.

tolerate their marvellous fantasies. The editor of "Amadis of Gaul" revealed a secret yet untold. The common reader hitherto had never strayed beyond the literal sense: but he was now informed that he had only culled the most perishable flowers; for the more elevated mind were reserved the perennial fruits of a mystical interpretation of the occult sense. It was in this way that the famous "Romaunt of the Rose," from a mere love-story and a general satire on society, was converted into a volume of theology, of politics, of ethics, and even of the *grand œuvre* of the alchemists. Such inchoate mysteries were told under "the rose"! The most ludicrous display of their literary imposture may be seen in that collection of popular tales called the "Gesta Romanorum." Every tale is accompanied by the gloss of a pious allegorist. An "emperor," or "Pompey the Great," is a frequent personage in these tales, and is always the type of "our heavenly Father," or "the soul," or "the Saviour;" while "Contes à la Fontaine," however licentious, pass through a moralization by the puritanical cant of hypocritical monkery.

Conforming to the spurious piety of this monkish taste, a voluminous commentary expounded the morality of the ravishing versatilities of Ariosto. Berni gravely assured us that all the marvels of enchanted gardens, voluminous dragons, sylvan savages, and monsters with human faces, were only thrown out for the amusement of the ignorant; and concludes with these memorable lines, which he freely borrowed from the father of Italian poesy:—

"Ma voi ch'avete gl'intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde,
Sotto queste coperte alte e profonde!" *

* Berni's "Bojardo," canto xxxi. st. 2. He has hardly improved the verse in the "Inferno," canto ix. ver. 61:—

"O voi ch'avete gl'intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde,
Sotto il velame degli versi strani."

"But ye of sounder intellect admire the wisdom hidden under these coverings, high and profound!" A strain so solemn and melodious was not the least exquisite pleasantry from a burlesque satirist!

Camoens having adopted the Grecian mythology in his Christian epic, recourse was had to a mystic allegory to defend the incongruity. When Vasco de Gama and his companions sport with Thetis and her nymphs, allegorically, though in good earnest, some Portuguese commentator has explained how "these fantastic amours signify the *wild sects* of different enthusiasts in the most rational institutions, which, however contrary to each other, all agree in deriving their authority from the same source." To such ineptitudes are the allegorists sometimes driven, from the sickly taste of gratifying the infirmity of readers by cloaking their freest inventions in the garb of piety and morality. Thus the popular literature of Europe was overrun by these adumbrations. Even Milton echoed the occult doctrine which he had caught from the seers of the old *romanzatori*,—those Gothic Homers in whose spells he had been bound:—

> "Forests and enchantments drear,
> *Where more is meant than meets the ear.*"

While this mania of allegorizing fictitious narratives was in vogue, a remarkable occurrence, had it been publicly known, might have let the initiated into a secret more "high and profound" than any of their esoteric revelations, and might have exposed the imposture which had been so long practised on their simplicity. The hapless Tasso was harassed by a most "stiff-necked" generation of "the learned Romans," as he calls the classicists,—a mob of *signori*, of mechanical critics, protesting against his potent inventions.

> "Magnanima Mensogna, hor quando è il vero
> Si bello che si posse à te preporre."

The forest incantations of Ismen and the enchantments of Armida, those true creations of Gothic romance, were on the

point of utter perdition. In this extremity, the poet decided to have recourse to the prevalent folly of fitting an allegory to his epic. He acknowledges to his confidential friend that the whole was only designed to humor the times, and begs that he may not be laughed at. "I will act the profound, and show that I have a deep political purpose;" and he might have added a whole system of ethics which has been extorted from the presumed allegory. "Under this shield," he proceeds, "I shall endeavor to protect the *loves* and the *enchantments*," — those golden leaves which the furious classicists would have torn out of his romantic epic. By this singular fact we are led to this important discovery, that to allegorize is no difficult affair; for the present allegory was "the work of a single morning!"*

Tasso's confession is a perpetual demonstration of *the fallacies of allegory*. We must wholly rid ourselves of "gl'intelletti sani," if we doubt that the original writers who have been so largely allegorized ever composed an extended fictitious narrative but in all the freedom of invention, in open daylight, and never seeking to hide nature in secret coverts.

If, as we see, an allegory may be ingeniously drawn from a work which never was allegorical; so, when an allegory seems designed, its secret application is usually the forlorn hope of literature, since the most subtile conjectures on these enigmas have wholly differed from each other.

Persons and incidents in an allegorical fiction are noses of

* The "Allegoria dalla Poema" is appended to the ancient editions of Tasso's "Gerusalemme Liberata." The one before me is dated Ferrara, 1582. I believe it has been indignantly rejected by modern editors. When we detect Tasso seriously describing Godfrey as the type of the human understanding, Rinaldo and Tancred and others as different faculties of the soul, and the common soldiers as the body of man, we regret that an honorable mind should degrade itself by such literary imposture. At length, having succeeded in imposing on others, he attempted to impose on himself; for he actually commenced a second "Jerusalem" on the allegorical system, and did not more happily succeed in his elder days than our Akenside in his philosophical destruction of his youthful poem.

wax, ever to be shaped by a more adroit finger. But, in a lengthened allegory, the ground is often shifted: the allegorister tires of his allegory, and at length means what he says, and nothing more. This has driven the expounders of the double sense into the absurdity of explaining an identical object, sometimes in a metaphysical, and at others in a material sense: they take up what their fancy requires, and cautiously drop what would place them in an inextricable position.

DANTE opened his great work in the darkness of an allegory; but how the erratic commentators have lost their way in "Le tenebre della Divina Commedia"! What are the three allegorical animals which open "the Vision"? The double sense remains inexplicable from its abundant explanations. Are these animal personifications of three great passions? Is the gay panther the type of luxurious pleasure; the lion, of ambition; the she-wolf, of avarice? But what if the spotted panther should be the representative of Dante's own Florence, and its spots indicate the Neri and the Bianchi factions? The hungry lion, with its lofty head, would then be superb France; and the lean she-wolf, never satiate, be devouring Rome. Yet a later revelation from Niebuhr, according to his Platonic ideas, sees but three metaphysical beings, — the types of the soul, the understanding, and the senses. Should some future allegorister discover, by his historical, political, and ethical fancies, that the three animals were designed, one for a wavering and maculated Ghibelline, and the others for the resolute papal Guelphs, the probability would be much the same. In truth, we can afford but small confidence to these expounders of the double sense; for when Jean Molinet allegorized the "Roman de la Rose," and illustrated it by historical appliances, as chronology was rarely consulted in his day, it appears that this good canon of Valenciennes had allegorized in reference to persons who flourished and events which occurred posterior to the time of the writers.

In the instances which we have indicated, such as in Ariosto and Tasso, it was the commentator who had indulged his allegorical genius, not the original writers themselves. With one of our great poets, unhappily, the case is reversed: the poetic character and destiny of Spenser stand connected with allegory; for here the poet himself prematurely *meditated on his allegory before he invented his fiction.* The difference is immense. SPENSER fell a victim to this phantom of the poetic creed of his day. Deeming a mystic allegory a novel spirit in poesy, he who was to run the glorious career of Faeryland first forged the brazen bonds which he could never shake off. His invention was made subordinate to a prescribed system. The poet was continually running after the allegory, which he did not always care to recover in the exuberance of his imagination, and the copious facility of his stanzas. Often must he have deprived his twelve knights-errant of their tangible humanity, perpetually relapsing into their metaphysical nonentities, — Sir Guyon into temperance, Arthegal into justice, and Sir Caladore into courtesy!

Yet this is not the sole defect of the allegorical character of the "Faery Queen." We may suspect, that, when SPENSER decided on constructing an allegorical poem, he had not any settled notions of the artifice of types, nor yet of the subjects to be symbolized; of fictions which were to conceal truths, and of truths which might be mistaken for fictions. A strange confusion often prevails in his system, sometimes ambiguous, sometimes contradictory, whenever the allegory loses itself in what is not allegorical, or the reality is as suddenly lost amid the mystical fancies.

The poet himself announced that the "Faery Queen" was "a continued allegory or dark conceit;" and he was so strongly convinced that "all allegories are doubtfully construed," that he determined to expound his own text regarding a most eminent personage; but this was merely to secure a courtly eulogy on a royal patroness. "In the 'Faerie

Queene,' I mean *glory* in my *general* intention; but, in my *particular*, I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of the queen and her kingdom in Faeryland." He afterwards adds, that "in some places also I do otherwise shadow her." And, further, the poet informs us that "her majesty is two persons, a royal queen and a most virtuous and beautiful lady." Truly her majesty might have viewed herself "in mirrors more than one," and, as she much liked, in different dresses, — now as the Faerie Queen, now as Belphœbe, now as Cynthia, now as Mercilla; and, in the "Legend of Chastity," who would deny that Britomart is the shadow of the Virgin Queen, notwithstanding that this lady-warrior bears a closer resemblance to Virgil's Camilla, to Ariosto's Bradamante, and Tasso's Clorinda? All this the poet has revealed; but, had he been silent, these mystical types might have baffled even the perilous ingenuity of Upton, his egregious expounder of the double sense, the exuberance of whose conjectural sagacity might have enlightened and charmed even Spenser himself!

The poet was himself aware, that, when an allegory does not gracefully unveil itself, it admits of the most dubious expositions. The allegories of the "Faery Queen" which allude to public events are transparent. The first book exhibits the struggles of the Reformation with Papistry. Una is Truth; the Red-cross Knight, the Christian militant, still subjected to trial and infirmity, separated from Una, or, as it was called, "the true Religion," by the magical illusions of Archimagus, whom Warton considers was the Arch-Fiend himself; but Upton, only an adumbration of "his Holiness." The terrible giant, Orgoglio, seems to have a stronger claim to be the proud and potent Bishop of Rome, enamoured as he is of Superstition in the false Duessa, that gorgeous enchantress, so fair and foul, arrayed in purple and scarlet, whom he has seated on his seven-headed dragon, and on whose head he has placed a triple crown. The dark den of monstrous Error, the hastening cavalcade of every splendid vice, the combat

with the Infidel Sans Foy, the church militant finally triumphant in the solemn union of the Red-cross with Una, complete the allegory of "Holiness." The Apocalypse may serve as the commentary on some of these personages; but the well-known title of the lady may not be risked to "ears polite." But such is the movable machinery of allegorical history, that Sir Walter Scott, in his review of Todd's Spenser, has discovered many other shadowings of *facts* in the history of Christian "Holiness," who, like the Red-cross Knight, separated from Una, had to encounter "the monster Error, and her brood," in paganism, before the downfall of Orgoglio and Duessa, and Popery in England: in the freedom of the Red-cross Knight from his imprisonment, our critic reveals the establishment of the Protestant Church.* Sir Walter might have noticed Spenser's abhorrence of the Puritans.

The allegory is still more obvious when the poet alludes to some contemporary events. It is then a masquerade by daylight, where the maskers pass on, holding their masks in their hands. In the fifth book we see the distressed knight, Bourbon, opposed by a rabble-rout in his attempt to possess himself of the Lady *Fleur de Lis*, whom he loves for "her lordships and her lands." He bears away that half-reluctant and coy lady. But, for this purpose, Bourbon had basely changed his shield; and, reproached by Sir Arthegal, or Justice, he offers but a recreant's apology:—

> "When time shall serve,
> My former shield I may resume again:
> To temporize is not from truth to swerve.
>
> 'Fie on such forgerie!' said Arthegal;
> 'Under one hood to shadow faces twain.'"

The change of shields of Sir Bourbon is the change of faith of Henry of Navarre; and the reluctant mistress is that uncompliant France whom he forced to take him as her mon-

* "Edinburgh Review," vol. vii. p. 215.

arch. Not less obvious is the episode of the Lady Belgé calling for aid on the British prince, — she, now widowed, and whose seventeen sons were reduced to five by the cruelties of Geryon, and the horrors of that implacable "monster, who lay hid in darkness, under the cursed Idol's altar-stone:" the great revolution of the Netherlands, the reduction of the seventeen provinces, and the horrors of a Romish persecution, are apparent.

But, when the allegory runs into obscurer incidents and more fictitious personages than those which we have noticed, it becomes rarefied into volatile conjecture, or, by our ingenuity, may be shaped into partial resemblances, always uncertain when we accept invented fictions as historical evidence. We know that a writer of an elaborate fictitious narrative may have touched on circumstances and characters caught from life; but all these, in passing through the mind of the inventor, are usually so altered from their reality, to be accommodated to the higher design of the invention, that any parallel in private history, or any likeness of an individual character, any indistinct allusion, can never deserve our historical confidence. A picture of human nature would be an anomalous work, in which we could trace no resemblance to individuals, or discover no coincidences of circumstances.

A century and a half after the publication of the "Faery Queen," a commentator of "the double sense" revealed to its readers that sealed history which they had never read, and which the poet had never divulged. A few traditional rumors may have floated down; but it was UPTON'S edition which startled the world by the abundance of its modern revelations.

JOHN UPTON, Prebendary of Rochester, and the master of a public school, which he raised to eminence, was distinguished for his scholastic acquirements, the depth of his critical erudition, and for his acquaintance with the history of the Elizabethan court, chiefly, however, drawn from Camden. Acute

in his emendations of texts, they were not, however, slightly tinged by an over-refining pedantry at the cost of his taste; and, as his judgment was the infirmest of his faculties, in his enthusiasm for an historical illustration of Spenser, he seems often encumbered by his knowledge striking out similitudes and parallels: a few appear not infelicitous; but many are suggested in the licentiousness of vague conjecture, or left half in the light, and half in the dark. His "Critical Observations on Shakspeare" remind one of Bentley's "slashing" of Milton. Dr. Johnson has been censured for the severity of his character of UPTON. I know not whether the doctor ever attended to Upton's Commentary on Spenser; he has, however, admirably hit off a prominent feature of our critic: "Every cold" (in Upton's case, I would rather say warm) "empiric, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist."

"In one sense," says UPTON, "you are in Fairyland; yet, in another, you may be in the British dominions." And, further, "where the *moral* allusion is not apparent, you must look for an *historical* allusion." Such are the fundamental positions of the allegorical theory, by which a conjectural historian designs to unveil the secret sense of a romantic epic; the poet, according to him, having frigidly descended into the historiographer of the court of Elizabeth, rather than of the court of the Faery Queen, — to catch "the Cynthias of the minute," and to waste his colors on their evanescent portraits.

And amusing it is to watch the historical conjecturer of a romantic poem perilously creeping along the dark passages of secret history; but he is often at a stand. In "the palpable obscure," the historical reality, which he seems to be touching, suddenly disappears under his grasp. We have no golden key to open the occult chamber, where we are told so many knights and ladies lie entranced near two centuries in their magical sleep, and where, amid the shadowiness, the historical

necromancer promptly furnishes us with their very names, recognizing all these enchanted persons by their very attitudes.

One of his most felicitous conjectures regards "the gentle Squire Timias" as the poet's honored friend, Sir Walter Rawleigh. Sir Walter once incurred the disgrace of the queen by a criminal amour with one of the maids of honor: he was for some time banished the court; but the injury to the lady was expiated by marriage. The private history we are to look for in the allegory. Timias offends Belphœbe, the patroness of Chastity, and the Queen of England, who surprised "the gentle squire" in a very suspicious attitude of tenderness with Amoret. This lady was suffering from violence, having been "rapt by greedie Lust;" and the gentle squire himself had partaken of the mischance, in encountering that savage. Timias, the knight, is seen —

> "From her fair eyes wiping the dewy wet,
> Which softly slid; and kissing them atween,
> And handling soft the hurts which she did get."

Belphœbe on the sudden appears, and indignantly exclaims, —

> "'Is this the faith?' she said, and said no more;
> But turned her face, and fled away for evermore."

In a romantic scene,* "the gentle squire" in banishment is wasted with grief, so as not to be recognized by his friends: his lone companion is a turtle-dove, a magical and sympathizing bird, who entices Belphœbe, that Sovereign Chastity, to pursue its playful flight, till it leads her to the cell of the miserable man from whom she had so long averted her face; and Timias recovers her favor.

In this extended scene, we are to view the condition of Rawleigh during his disgrace; and the opening of the canto gives some countenance to the particular application. The aptitude of a resemblance, however, may only be a coinci-

* Book iii. canto viii.

dence. The fatal error of our conjectural historian is that of spinning at his allegory long after he is left without a thread. In Amoret's calamitous adventure, "rapt by greedie Lust," Upton sees an adumbration of the lady of Sir Walter *before* her marriage; and in another adventure, where another person, *Serena*, with "the gentle squire," are both carried to a hermit's cell, to be healed of the wounds inflicted by calumny and scandal, their condition *after* marriage. Our diviner, as further evidence of "the double sense," discovers how remarkably appropriate was the name of Serena to the lady of Rawleigh.

In all these transmigrations of persons, the enigmatical expounder acknowledges that the typical incidents suddenly diverge from their prototype. The parallels run crooked, and the fictions will not square with the facts; and he desperately exclaims, that "the poet has designedly perplexed the story:" but he concludes with this hardy asumption, "If the reader cannot see through these disguises, he will see nothing but *the dead letter*." And what but "the dead letter," as this hierophant of mystic senses asperses the free inventions of genius, can now interest the readers of Spenser? For the honor of our poet, we protest against the dark and broken dreams hovering about a commentator's desk. Who can credit that the courteous and courtly spirit of Spenser would thus lay bare to the public eye the delicate history of the lady of Sir Walter, even by a remote allusion? Yet this he does by connecting her name with Amoret carried away by "greedie Lust;" and with Serena, who required to be healed of the wounds inflicted by scandal. Can we conceive that the poet would have thus deliberately re-opened the domestic wound, still tender, of his patron-friend, and distressed that "serene" lady, in a poem to be read by them, to be conned by malicious eyes, and to be consigned to posterity?

The readers of Upton's revelations may often be amused by his lettered ingenuity reasoning with eager perversity. In

book ii., canto i., a pathetic incident occurs in a forest, where we find a lady with her infant on her bosom, and her knight extended in death beside her. Her shriek is deadly as the blow she has given herself. Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, flies to her succor: dying, she tells how "her liefest lord" had been beguiled, "for he was flesh," by Acrasia, or sensual pleasure. The lady had recovered him from the fell embraces of that sorceress, who, in parting, seduces him to drink from a charmed cup her accursed *wine*. On his return homewards with his lady, he would quench his thirst at a fountain; but —

"So soon as Bacchus with the Nymphe does lincke," —

that is, the instant the pure water reaches his viny lips, — he tastes, and he dies!

The Knight of Temperance takes the infant from the bleeding bosom of the mother to wash it in the fountain; but no water could cleanse its bloody hand; hence it was to be called "Ruddimane:" it was "a sacred symbol in the son's flesh, to tell of the mother's innocence." Upton had discovered that the great Irish insurrectionist O'Neal, as Camden records, "dwelt in all the pollutions of unchaste embraces, and had several children by O'Donnel's wife."

The badge of the O'Neals was "a bloody hand." In the ecstasy of divination, he exclaims, "This lady with the bloody-handed babe is — the wife of O'Neal!" The dying lady had told her sad tale, but never had she hinted at the Irish origin. Her knight had fallen a victim to Acrasia; a suitable incident in the legend of temperance, — a result of that "passion" at which the poet pointed, and described as one which —

"Robs Reason of her due regality."

And this simple incident is converted into the fate of the O'Neals, presenting an image of the miseries of the Irish Rebellion!

We pass by the contemporary portraits inscribed by our speculative historian with real names. When fancy is busy, likenesses are often found; a single feature is sometimes taken for a whole physiognomy. Never surely did our conjecturer shoot wider of the mark than when he discovered, in the two burlesque characters of the poltroon Braggadochio and his cheating squire Trompart, the Duke of Anjou and his envoy Simier. These were eminent characters known in the court of Elizabeth. To the French prince the queen seemed partial; and once placed a ring on his finger, too sanguinely accepted as a plight of betrothment: and Simier was a discreet diplomatist, whom the queen publicly commended for his conduct. To have degraded such distinguished men by such vulgar baseness would have been a discrepancy in the taste and decorum of our courtly poet which Spenser never betrayed.*

In regard to Spenser, after all these allusions problematical for a succeeding generation, the poet is no longer to be judged by the darkness which has hidden small and fugitive matters. We cannot know the degree which Spenser allowed himself in distant allusions to the court of Elizabeth, or, as the poet himself vaguely said, to "Fairyland:" he may have promised far more than he would care to perform; for an epical poet must have found the descent into a chronicler of scandalous legends, a portrayer of so many nameless personages, incompatible with the flow and elevation of his themes. And

* It has been observed of Upton, that, though an excellent classical scholar, he was little versed in the romances of chivalry. In the romance of "Gyron le Courtois," he would have found the original of the farcical Knight Braggadochio; a fact, long after I had written the above, which I owe to Mr. Southey. Such ludicrous caricatures are unusual with the delicacy and elegance of Spenser, and they seem never to have been struck in his mint. I suspect we should not have had such farcical personages in the "Faery Queen," had not Spenser's propensity to imitation induced him to follow his beloved patron, who has not happily introduced in the "Arcadia" the low comic of Damœtas and his ugly daughter Mopsa.

for what was never ascertained in its own age we dare not confide to that mystical vaticinator of past events, a conjectural historian!

Our interpreter of allegory was honest as well as hardy: in truth, he is sometimes startled at the historical revelations which crowd on his mind. It required "the hound's fine footing," to borrow the beautiful figure of Spenser himself, for our conjecturer to course in this field of allegory. With great candor he says, "Let us take care we do not overrun our game, or start more game than we are able to catch." His occasional dilemmas are amusing. He perplexed himself by a discovery that Amoret, whom he had made the lady of Sir Walter Rawleigh, might also have served for Mary, Queen of Scots. In this critical crucifixion, he cries in torture, "I will neither affirm nor deny that Amoret is the type of Mary, Queen of Scots!" But he had his ecstasies; for on another occasion, having indulged a very extravagant fancy, he exclaims in joyous rapture, "This may show how far types and symbols may be carried!" Yet, with his accustomed candor, he lowers down. "If the reader should think my arguments too flimsy, and extended beyond their due limits, and should laugh —

> 'To see their thrids so thin as spiders frame,
> And eke so short that seemed their ends out shortly came,' —

let him consider the latitude of interpretation all types and symbolical writings admit."* Truly that latitude has been too often abused on graver subjects than "the Faery Queen;" but the honesty of our mystical interpreter of double senses may plead for the extravagance of his ingenuity, whenever he needs our indulgence.

Enough on this curious subject of allegory, — this child of darkness among the luminous progeny of Fancy. We have

* Upton's note at the close of the fifth book of "the Faery Queen."

shown its changeable nature, and how frequently it fails in unity and clearness; we have demonstrated that "the double sense" — this system of types and symbols — has served as an imposture, since allegories have been deduced from works which were not allegorical, and forced interpretations of an ambiguous sense have led to fallacies which have fatally been introduced into history, into politics, and into theology.

THE FIRST TRAGEDY AND THE FIRST COMEDY.

In the transition from the simpler interlude to the aggrandizement of a more complicate scene and more numerous personages, so indistinct were the notions of tragedy and comedy, that the writer of a morality in 1578, declaring that his purpose was to represent "the manners of men, and fashion of the world, now-a-days," distinguishes his drama both as "a Pleasant Tragedy" and "a Pitiful Comedy."* This play, indeed, may be placed among the last of the ancient dramas; and it is probable that the author considered that these vague expressions might serve to designate a superior order of dramatic productions.

The term Comedy was as indefinite in France as with ourselves. Margaret of Valois, in 1544, gave the title of Comedy to such scriptural pieces as "the Nativity," "the Adoration of the Kings," and "the Massacre of the Innocents;" and in Spain, at the same period, they also called their moral pieces comedies. The title of one of these indicates their matter, "La Doleria del Sueño del Mundo; Comedia tratada por via de Philosophia Moral," — "The Anguish of the Sleep of the World; a Comedy treated in the style of Philosophic Morality." Comedy was the general appellative for a play. Shakspeare himself calls the play of the players in "Hamlet" both a tragedy and a comedy. It is quite evident that at this period they had no distinct conception of comedy merely as a pleas-

* "A Moral and Pitiful Comedie," entitled "All for Money," &c., by T. Lupton, 1578. In the prologue, the author calls it "A Pleasant Tragedy."

ant exhibition of society. Aristotle had not afforded them a correct description in our sense, drawing his notions from the old comedy, those personal satires or farcical lampoons acted on the Athenian stage.

To this day we remain still unsatisfied what Dante meant by calling his great poem a "Commedia." Dante throws the same sort of mystery over the species of his poem as he has done over the creation of a classical diction for his own Italy. According to his interpretation, the lofty style was denominated tragic; and, in opposition to it, he has called his work "Commedia," as of a more humble style; and, on another occasion, he describes comedy as something that begins sadly and ends happily, as we find it in his great poem. We must, however, accept the definition as very obscure, when we consider that both his subject and his diction so often led him to sublimity of conception and expression; but the style of criticism was yet unformed in the days of the Italian Homer.

It is remarkable that Boccaccio has entitled his pastoral of "Ameto" a "Commedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine." It is difficult to imagine that the almost contemporaneous commentator would have misused the word: we might presume he attached the idea of a drama to this disputed term.

While these indistinct notions of tragedy and comedy were prevalent with us, even long after we had a public theatre, we really possessed tragedy and comedy in their more classical form, — Tragedy, which soared to the sententiousness of Seneca; and Comedy, which sported with Plautus and Terence.

We owe this first TRAGEDY in our language, represented before the queen in 1561 by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, to the master-spirit who planned "the Mirror for Magistrates," and left as its model "the Induction." SACKVILLE, Lord Buckhurst, the first Earl of Dorset, in that national poem had struck with the nerve of Chaucer while he anticipated the grave melodious stanza and the picturing

invention of Spenser. But, called away from the land of the Muses to the political cabinet, this fine genius seems repeatedly to have consigned his works to the hands of others: even his lighter productions are still concealed from us in their anonymous condition. As, in "the Mirror for Magistrates," Sackville had resigned that noble scheme to inferior names; so in this tragedy of "Ferrex and Porrex," or, as it was sometimes entitled, "the Tragedy of Gorboduc," while his genius struck out the same originality of plan, yet the titlepage informs us that he accepted a coadjutor in THOMAS NORTON, who, as much as we know of him in other things, was a worthy partner of Sternhold and Hopkins.

In this first tragedy in our language, cast in the mould of classical antiquity, we find a division of scenes and a progressive plot carried on, though somewhat heavily, through five acts: the ancient ethical choruses are preserved, changing their metres with rhyme. And here, for the first time, blank verse was recited on the stage. Notwithstanding these novel refinements, our first tragedy bears a strong impress of ancient simplicity. Every act was preceded by "a dumb show," prefiguring the incidents of the opening act: these scenical displays of something considered to be analogous to the matter were remains of the pageants.

Blank verse, which the Earl of Surrey had first invented for his version of "Virgil," the Earl of Dorset now happily applied to the dramatic dialogue. To both these noblemen our poets owe their emancipation from rhyme; but the rhythmical artifices of blank verse were not discovered in the monotonous, uncadenced lines of its inventors. The happiest inventor does not overcome all difficulties.

SACKVILLE, in this tragedy, did not work with the potent mastery of his "Induction;" his fire seems smothered in each exact line; he steals on with care, but with fear, as one treading on ice; and appears not to have settled in his mind the true language of emotion, for we feel none. He is ethical

more than dramatic. His lifeless personages have no distinctness of character; his speeches are scholastic orations: but the purity of his diction and the aptness of his epithets are remarkable; his words and phrases are transparent; and he may be read with ease by those not versed in ancient lore. The political part of the tragedy is not destitute of interest; developing the misery of fraternal wars, the division of sovereign power, each contending for dominion, and closing in the dissolution of all government by the despair of a people. We have ourselves witnessed in these times a similar scene of the enmity of brothers and monarchs.

A political anecdote concerning this tragedy is worth recording. In the discussions of the dangers and mischiefs of such a state of insubordination, the poet, adopting the prevalent notions of the divine right and the authority of "the absolute king," inculcates the doctrine of passive obedience. These lines, which appear in the first edition, were silently removed from the later ones.* It is an evidence that these dreary principles, which in the following reigns of James and Charles produced such fatal misunderstandings, even at this time began to be questioned. Our poet, however, under the reckless councils of a court minion, had covered the severest satire on those monarchs who rage with "the lust of kingdoms," and "subject to no law," and who hold their enormous will to be the privilege of regal power. Sackville seems to have adopted the principle which Machiavel had artfully managed in his "Prince," in the spirit of damning irony.

There is such a level equality throughout the whole style of this drama,† that it has given rise to a suspicion that the work could only be the composition of one mind and one ear. It is not in the constitution of the human intellect that Norton

* The lines, which are very miserable, are preserved in Dodsley's "Old Plays."

† Warton has analyzed this drama in his "History of English Poetry," vol. iv. 178, 8vo. It is in the collection of Dodsley and Hawkins.

could emulate Sackville, or that Sackville could bring himself down to Norton. This internal evidence struck Warton; and, tracing it by "the Mirror for Magistrates," the suspicion was confirmed: the scenes of "Gorboduc" are visibly marked with the greater poet's characteristics, "in a perspicuity of style and a command of numbers superior to the tone of his times." The name of Norton affixed to the titlepage might only indicate his management of the pageants! and possibly, being a licenser of books and a Puritan, even his name might be a recommendation of this drama, for certain persons. Few things in those days were more loosely conducted than the business and the artifices of printers, who generally procured their copies surreptitiously, or were permitted to accommodate them to their own free management and deceptive titlepages.

We must not decide on *the first tragedy* by a comparison with the more attractive and impassioned ones which soon afterwards inundated our theatres. The court-circle had never before listened to such an amazing novelty; and the poetic-critic of that day pronounced that "those stately speeches and well-sounding phrases were full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach." Sir Philip Sidney only grieved that this tragedy might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies, being "faulty both in place and time,—the two necessary companions of all corporal actions." Sidney did not live to witness the code of Aristotle impugned, and his unities set at defiance, by a swarm of dramatic bees, whose wild music and native sweetness were in their own humming and their own honey.

This our first tragedy attracted by its classical form the approval of some great moderns. Rymer, a stout Aristotelian, who has written on tragedy, was astonished to find "such a classical fable on this side the Alps," which, he plainly tells us, "might have been a better direction to Shakspeare and Jonson than any which they had the luck to follow." And Pope was not the less struck by the chaste style and the deco-

rum of Sackville, who, having several murders in his tragedy, veiled them from the public eye; conforming to the great Horatian canon, they are told, and not viewed in the representation. Pope in conversation declared, too, that Sackville wrote in a much purer style than Shakspeare in his first plays, without affectation and bombast! and he has delivered a more formal decision in print: "The writers of the succeeding age might have improved as much in other respects by copying from Sackville, from a propriety in the sentiments and dignity in the sentences, and an unaffected perspicuity of style, which all the succeeding poets, not excepting Shakspeare himself, either little understood, or perpetually neglected."

These are edicts from the school of classical antiquity. It was on the earnest recommendation of Pope that Spence published an edition of this tragedy, which had accidently been put into the hands of Pope by the father of the Wartons. Our vernacular writers, even the greatest, were almost unknown in that day, and they only accidently occurred.*

Spence, a feeble classical critic, was so overcome by the notion that "a privy-councillor" must be more versant in the language and the feelings of royalty than a plebeian poet, that, in his preface pointing out "the stately speeches," he exclaimed in ecstasy, "'Tis no wonder if the language of *kings* and *statesmen* should be less happily imitated by a *poet* than a *privy-councillor*." To vindicate Shakspeare, at whom this unguarded blow seemed levelled, the historian of our poetry,

* This our first tragedy, "Ferrex and Porrex," offers a striking evidence of our literary knowledge. Dryden, alluding to it, refers to a spurious copy published under the title of "Gorboduc:" but he could not have seen it; for he calls it "Queen Gorboduc," whereas he is "King;" and he appears to think that it was written in *rhyme*, and notices Shakspeare as the inventor of blank verse! When Pope requested Spence to reprint "Gorboduc," they were so little cognizant of these matters, that the spurious and defective "Gorboduc" was printed instead of the genuine "Ferrex and Porrex." This ignorance of our ancient writers lasted to a later period.

seated in his professorial chair, flung his lightning on the impious critic. "Whatever merit there is in this play, and particularly in the speeches, it is more owing to the poet than the privy-councillor. If a first minister was to write a tragedy, I believe the piece will be the better, the less it has of the first minister. When a statesman turns poet, I should not wish him to fetch his ideas or his language from the cabinet. I know not why a king should be better qualified than a private man to make kings talk in blank verse."

Literary history would have supplied the positive fact. Cardinal Richelieu, that great minister, wrote a memorable tragedy; and, in accordance with his own familiar notions, the minister called it "Europe." It was written in the style of "a privy-councillor," and it was hissed! while Corneille, who wrote as a poet, for the national theatre, composed sentiments which statesmen got by heart.

Our literary antiquaries long doted on the first English comedy,—"Gammer Gurton's Needle;" being a regular comedy in five acts in rhyme. The rusticity of the materials is remarkable. A diligent crone, darning the lower habiliments of Hodge, loses her needle,—

> "A little thing, with a hole in the end, as bright as any siller (silver);
> Small, long, sharp at the point, and straight as any piller."

Had a needle not been a domestic implement of more rarity than it is since Birmingham flourished, we had not had such a pointed and polished description. In fact, the loss of the Gammer's needle sets the whole village in flames; the spark falling from the mischievous waggery of a Tom o' Bedlam in an artful insinuation against a certain gossip notable for the luxuriance of her grotesque invectives. Dame Chat is a scold, whose curses and oaths neither the fish-market nor Shakspeare himself could have gone beyond. Brawls and battles involve the justice, the curate, and the Devil himself, in their agency. The prime author of all the mischief produces the

catastrophe; for he contrives to make Hodge extract from a part more tender than his heart the cause of so much discord, with great risk to its point and straightness; and the parties conclude, —

"For Gammer Gurton's needle's sake, let us have a PLAUDITE!"

The writer of this extraordinary, and long supposed to be the earliest comedy in our language, the titlepage informs us was Mr. S——, Master of Arts; and, moreover, that it was acted at the University of Cambridge. When afterwards it was ascertained that Mr. S—— was no less a person than JOHN STILL, subsequently Bishop of Bath and Wells, it did not diminish the number of its admirers. The black-letter brotherhood were long enamoured of this most ancient comedy, as a genuine beauty of the infancy of the drama. Dodsley and Hawkins enshrined "Gammer Gurton's Needle" in their "Reliquary;" and literary superstition —

"Swore it was the relic of a saint."

The mere lovers of antiquity endured the raillery of the wits for the puerility of the plot, the vulgar humor, and the homeliness of the style. One had asserted that "STILL had displayed the true genius of comedy, and the choice of his *subject* only was to be regretted;" another declared that "the vein of familiar humor and a kind of grotesque imagery are not unlike some parts of Aristophanes, but without the graces of *language*." Thus one admirer gives up the subject, and another the style! Even Warton fondly lingered in an apology for the grossness of the "Gammer." — "In a polished age, that writer would have chosen, nor would he perhaps have disgraced, a better subject. It has been thought surprising that a learned audience could have endured some of the indelicate scenes; but the established festivities of scholars were gross, and agreeable to their general habits." This apology has turned out to be more plausible than true.

This ancient comedy is the work of a truly comic genius, who knew not how to choose his subject, and indulged a taste repulsive to those who only admit of delicate and not familiar humor. Its grossness, however, did not necessarily result from the prevalent grossness of the times; since a recent discovery, with which Warton was unacquainted, has shown the world that an English comedy, which preceded the hitherto supposed first comedy in our language, is remarkable for its chasteness, the propriety of its great variety of characters, the truth of the manners in a wide circle of society, and the uninterrupted gayety pervading the whole airy composition.

So recently as in 1818, an ancient printed drama, styled "Ralph Roister Doister," was discovered;* a legitimate comedy of five acts in rhyme, and, as the writer himself professes, modelled on the dramas of Plautus and Terence. He claims for it the honor of the highest class, — that of "comedy;" but this term was then so indistinct, that the poet adds the more usual one of "interlude."

Gammer Gurton is a representation of sordid rusticity. Roister Doister opens the movable scenery of domestic life in the metropolis, touched with care, and warm with reality. The plot, without involution, progresses through the acts. An egotistical and affectedly amorous hairbrain, ever lamenting the dangerous beauty of his ridiculous self, fancies to marry a fair dame. He is hit off as —

> "So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,
> I trow, never was any creature living."

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* Reprinted by the Rev. Mr. Briggs, the possessor. After a limited reprint, it was republished as the first number of a cheap edition of Old English Dramas, published by T. White, 1830; a work carried on to a few volumes only. The text reads apparently very correct, and seems to have passed under a skilful eye. I have read it with attention, because I read it with delight. [It has since been reprinted by the Shakspeare Society, carefully collated from the unique original now in Eton-College Library, by Mr. Payne Collier.]

He is the whetstone of a sharp parasite, whose opening monologue exhibits his full portrait: —

> "But, know ye, that for all this merry note of mine,
> He might appose me now that should ask where I dine."

He runs over a nomenclature of a most variegated acquaintance, with some fugitive strictures exquisitely personal. We find ourselves in a more advanced stage in society than we expected in the reigns of our last Henry or Edward. Such personages abounded in the twenty years of peace and luxury under James the First, when the obsequious hanger-on flourished among the town-heroes of "the Gull's Horn-book." This parasite is also one of those domestic dependants whose shrewdness and artifices supply a perpetual source of comic invention; such as those found among the Latin dramatists, whose scenes and incidents are Grecian, and from whom this "Matthew Merry-greek," by his name, seems happily transplanted. This poet delights by scenes colored with the truth of nature, and by the clear conception of his domestic personages. There is a group of domestics, — the ancient housekeeper spinning on her distaff amidst her maidens, some sewing, some knitting, all in free chat: these might have formed a study for the vivid Teniers, and even for Shakspeare in his happiest vein. They are not the domestics of Swift and of Mandeville, — the spoilers of the establishment: not that they are without the common feelings of the servants' hall; for they have at heart the merry prosperity of their commonwealth. After their "drudgerie," to dissipate their "weariness" was the fundamental principle of the freedom of servitude. Their chorus is "lovingly to agree." A pleasant song, on occasion of the reception of "a new-come man" in the family, reveals the "mystery" of their ancient craft.*

* This song of domesticity, as probably it never has been noticed, I preserve in the note, that the reader may decide on the melody of such native simplicity.

This song may have been written about the close of the reign of Henry

These early dramatists describe their characters by their names; an artless mode, which, however, long continued to be the practice of our comic writers; and we may still trace it in modern comedies. Steele, in his periodical paper, "the Lover," condemned it as no better a device than of underwriting the name of an animal: it is remarkable, that, in this identical paper, an old bachelor is called "Wildgoose," and the presumed author of "the Lover" is Marmaduke "Myrtle."

the Eighth. The short ballad metres in our ancient poems are perfectly harmonious, and the songs are racy and joyous:—

I.
"A thing very fitte
For them that have witte,
And are felowes knitte,
Servants in one house to bee;
As fast fast for to sitte,
And not oft to flitte,
Nor varie a whitte,
But lovingly to agree.

II.
No man complainyng
Nor other disdainyng
For losse or for gainyng,
But felowes or friends to bee;
No grudge remainyng,
No work refrainyng,
Nor helpe restrainyng,
But lovingly to agree.

III.
No man for despite
By worde or by write
His felowe to twite,
But further in honestie;
No good turns entwite,
Nor old sores recite,
But let all goe quite,
And lovingly to agree.

IV.
After drudgerie,
When they be werie,
Then to be merie,
To laugh and sing they be free;
With chip and cherie,
High derie derie,
Trill on the berie,
And lovingly to agree."

Anstey has made the most happy use of characteristic names in the "Bath Guide;" which is an evidence that they may still be successfully appropriated, whenever an author's judgment equals the felicity of his invention.

Of a comedy, conjectured to have been written at the close of the reign of Henry the Eighth, we may be surprised that the language hardly retains a vestige of the rust of antiquity: so true it is, that the familiar language of the people has been preserved with rare innovations. Its Alexandrine measure, properly read or chanted, is a metre which runs on with facility: the versification has even happily imitated the sounds of the different instruments played on in one of the serenades; a refinement which we could not have imagined to have been within the reach of an artificer of verse in those days. All this would look suspicious, if for an instant we could imagine that this admirable drama was the contrivance of some Chatterton or Ireland. In style and versification, the writer far distanced those of his contemporaries, whose affectation of phrases rendered them harsh and obscure: he has, therefore, approached us. It is remarkable also that the very measure of this ancient dramatist, though those whose ear is only used to the decasyllabic measure have called it "a long hobbling metre," has been actually chosen by a modern poet, when writing familiar dialogue with the design of reviving rhymed comedy.*

The fate of some books is as remarkable as the histories of some men. This lorn and lost drama, deprived even of its title and the printer's name, offered no clew to the discovery of the fine genius who composed it; and the possessor, who deposited it in the library of Eton College, was not at all aware of its claim to be there preserved. It was to subsequent research, after the reprint had been made, that both the writer and the celebrity of his comedy were indisputably

* Hayley.

ascertained. We owe the discovery to a comic incident in the drama: an amatory epistle prepared by a scrivener's hand, for our gay amourists then could not always compose if they could write their billets-doux, being maliciously read to the lady, by purposely neglecting the punctuation, turned out to be a severe satire. The discomfited lover hastens to wreak his vengeance on the hapless scribe; who, however, reading it with the due punctuation, proves it to be a genuine love-letter. Wilson, in his "Art of Logic," gave this letter as an example of the use of punctuation in settling the sense; and without which, as in the present instance, we may have "a double sense and contrary meaning." He fortunately added, that his example was "taken out of an interlude made by NICHOLAS UDALL."

This was the learned UDALL, the Master of Eton School; and this very comedy had been so universally admired, that "Roister Doister" became a proverbial phrase to designate a hair-brained coxcomb. We now possess two pictures of the habits, the minds, and the dialogue of the English people in rural and in city life by two contemporaries, who wanted not the art of "holding the mirror up to nature."

THE PREDECESSORS AND CONTEMPORARIES OF SHAKSPEARE.

THE establishment of a variety of theatres is an incident in the history of the people, as well as of the national genius. The drama at first existed, it may be said, in privacy. Royalty and nobility maintained their own companies; the universities acted at their colleges, the "children" or the singing boys at the public schools, the lawyers at their halls; and some of the gentry at their seats had servants who were players. A stage for strollers would occasionally be hastily erected in the unsheltered yards of inns; and they would ramble into the country, till an Act of Elizabeth, in 1572, controlled these erratic bodies, classing them with "rogues and vagabonds." Throughout the kingdom, there was a growing predilection for theatrical entertainments: it was the national anticipation of a public theatre.

If Elizabeth, a popular sovereign, in 1572 checked the strollers assuming the character of players, two years afterwards, in 1574, she granted a patent to the servants of the Earl of Leicester* "to exercise the faculty of playing stage-plays, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure;" and she added, "within our city of London, and of any of our cities." This was a boon royally given, in which her "loving subjects" might gather from the tone of this dramatic state-paper, that the queen had resolved

* This patent, corrected from a former copy in Rymer, has been recovered by Mr. Collier. — *Annals of the Stage*, i. 211.

in council that the public should not be denied sharing in her own amusements.

The pleasures of the people were not, however, yet those of their grave seignors. The puritanic spirit of the anti-dramatists, which sometimes divided the councils of the queen, had lodged among the honest wardmotes. A protracted contest between the privy-council and the lord-mayor in common council, with protests and petitions, rose up; and long it seemed hopeless to patronize the players, who were not suffered to play. The Recorder Fleetwood, of whom we have many curious police-reports in the style of a *lieutenant de police*, — as the chief of his own spies, and the executioner of his own decrees, — had himself a fertile dramatic invention, which was largely developed in the singular "orders of the common-council" against the alarming innovation of PUBLIC PLAYS in the boundaries of the civic jurisdiction.* There was not a calamity, moral and physical, which could happen to any city, which the recorder has not made concomitant with the opening of playhouses. The infection of the plague was, however, then an irrefutable argument. In this contest between the court and the city, the common-council remained dogged asserters of their privileges: they drove the players from their sacred precincts to the boundaries and to "the liberties," where, however, they harassed these children of fancy by a novel claim, — that none were to be free in the "liberties" but themselves; which argument was submitted to the

* This singular document, incorrectly given by Strype, Mr. Collier has completed. "It throws much new light on the state of the drama at this period," and still more on the strange arguments which the Puritans of the day alleged against players and plays. Mr. Collier has preserved an old satirical epigram which had been perilous to print at that day: it was left for posterity on the fly-leaf of a book. It is addressed to —

"'The Fooles of the Cittee:'
They establish as a rule,
Not one shall play the fool
But they, — a worthy school!"

law-officers for their decision. The privy-council once more interfered, by a declaration that the chief-justices had not yet been able to determine their case, and therefore there was to be no present "intermeddling." It is evident that the government all along had resolved that the people should have a theatre. After two years of opposition to the patent granted to the players in 1574, the first playhouse was built, — a timber-house in the suburbs, — and received the appropriate title of "the Theatre:" and, about the same time, "the Curtain" rose in its vicinage, — a name supposed to have been derived from that appendage to a stage; for, to those who had been accustomed to the open stage of an inn-yard, the drop or "curtain" separating the actors from the audience was such a novelty, that it left its name to the house. The Blackfriars, the Round Globe, the Square Fortune, — whence Edward Alleyn, by his histrionic fame, drew the wealth which endowed Dulwich College, — are names almost consecrated by the eminent geniuses whose lives were connected with these theatres; and at one time it appears that seventeen playhouses had been erected: they were, however, wooden and thatched, till the Fortune was built with brick, and, in the theatrical phrase, "the heavens," that is, the open top, was tiled.

The popular fervor of the drama had now a centrical attraction; a place of social resort, with a facility of admission, was now opened;* and, when yet there was no reading public, the theatre would be substituted for the press; and often, wearied

* At the inferior playhouses, the admission was as low as a penny for "the groundlings," who stood in the roofless pit, which still retained the name of "the yard," — evidently from the old custom of playing in the yards of inns. In the higher theatres, "a room," or box, varied from sixpence to two shillings and sixpence. They played in daylight, and rose from their dinner to the playhouse. It was one of the city regulations, that "no playing be in the dark, so that the auditory may return home before sunset." Society was then in its nursery-times, and the solemnity of "the orders in common council" admirably contrasts with their simplicity; but they acted under the terror, that, when they entered a playhouse, they were joining in "the Devil's service!"

of the bearward and coarser sports, they flocked to the more intellectual entertainment. The playhouse was a wider sphere for their exertions, and it opened an arduous competition for the purveyors of these incessant novelties. The managers of theatres had now to look about for plays and playwrights. A general demand required not only an abundant, but, unfortunately, a rapid supply. What a crisis for genius, for its development and its destruction!

This was an event in the history of our literature which has not occurred in the literary history of any other European people. It was about the middle of the reign of Elizabeth that a race of dramatic writers burst forth on the nation, — writers, not easily numbered, of innumerable dramas.

Literature now opened a new avenue for a poor scholar; the first step of advancement in society from a collegiate life for those who found their future condition but ill provided for. A secretaryship, a chaplainship, or to be a gentleman's usher, — in a word, an humble retainer in great families, — circumscribed the ambition of the meek and the worthy: but there were others, in "their first gamesome age," whose —

> "Doting sires,
> Carked and cared to have them lettered;
> But their kind college from the teat did tent,
> And forced them walk before they weaned were." *

This, however, is but the style of apology which one of them gives to veil the fact that many were ejected from "the teat." Fiery emanations these, compelled to leave their cloistered solitudes, restless and reckless, they rushed to the metropolis, where this new mart of genius in the rising dramatic age was opened. Play-writing and play-acting, for they were often combined, were too magical a business to resist its delusions.

* Two such poor scholars are introduced in "the Return from Parnassus," alternately "banning and cursing Granta's muddy bank;" and Cambridge, where "our oil was spent."

They wrote, with rare exceptions, without revision. An act or two, composed with some meditation to awaken interest; a few movable scenes rapidly put together; and, at some fortunate moment, a burst of poetry, — usually wound up in pell-mell confusion: for how could they contrive a catastrophe to the chaos? Such writers relied on the passing curiosity which their story might raise, and more on the play of the actors, who, in the last bustling scenes, might lend an interest which the meagre dialogue of the economical poet so rarely afforded. They never wrote for posterity, and seem never to have pretended to it. They betrayed no sympathy for their progeny: the manager's stock was the foundling hospital for this spurious brood: the Muse even often sold her infant while it still lay on the breast. The huddled act of a play was despatched to the manager as the lure of a temporary loan, accompanied by a promissory note of expedition; and assuredly they kept to their word if ever they concluded the work.

This facility of production may be accounted for, not only from the more obvious cause which instigated their incessant toil, but from the ready sources whence they drew their materials. They dramatized evanescent subjects, in rapid competition, like the ballad-makers of their own day, or the novelists of ours; they caught "the Cynthia of the minute," — a domestic incident, — a tragic tale engaging the public attention produced many domestic tragedies founded on actual events; they were certain of exciting the sympathies of an audience. Two remarkable ones have been ascribed to Shakspeare by skilful judges, — "Arden of Feversham," where the repentance of an adulterous wife in the agony of conscience so powerfully reminds one of the great poet, that the German, Tieck, who has recently translated it, has not hesitated to subscribe to the opinion of some of our own critics; and "the Yorkshire Tragedy," which was printed with the name of Shakspeare in his own lifetime, and has been held to be

authentic; and surely "the Yorkshire Tragedy" at least possessed an equal claim with the monstrous "Titus Andronicus"* not to be ejected from the writings of Shakspeare. It is most probable that that, among others, was among the old plays which he often took in hand; and our judicial decisions have not always found "the divinity which stirs within them." The Italian novelists, which had been recently translated in PAINTER'S "Palace of Pleasure," these dramatists ransacked for their plots: this source opened a fresh supply of invention, and a combination of natural incidents, which varies the dry matter-of-fact drawn from the "Chronicles," which in their hands too often produced mere skeletons of poetry. They borrowed from the ancients when they could. Plautus was a favorite. They wrote for a day, and did not expect to survive many.

The rapid succession of this multitude of plays is remarkable: many have wholly perished by casualties and dispersions, and some possibly may still lie unsunned in their manuscript state.† We have only the titles of many which were

* The popular taste, at all times, has been prone to view in representation the most harrowing crimes; probably influenced by the vulgar notion, that, because the circumstances are literally true, they are therefore the more interesting. One of these writers was ROBERT YARRINGTON, who seems to have been so strongly attracted to this taste for scenical murder, that he wrote "Two Lamentable Tragedies," which he contrived to throw into one play. By a strange alternation, the scene veers backwards and forwards from England to Italy, both progressing together: the English murder is of a merchant in Thames Street; and the Italian, of a child in a wood, by ruffians hired by the uncle. The ballad deepens the pathetic by two babes; but which was the original of a domestic incident which first conveyed to our childhood the idea of an unnatural parent? It appears that we had a number of what they called "Lamentable Tragedies," whose very titles preserve the names of the hapless victims. Taylor, the water-poet, alludes to these "as murders fresh in memory;" and has himself described "the unnatural father who murdered his wife and children," as parallel to one of ancient date. Acts of lunacy were not then distinguishable from ordinary murders. — *Collier*, iii. 49.

† Not many years ago, Isaac Reed printed "the Witch" of MIDDLETON. Recently another manuscript play appeared, — "the Second Maiden's

popular, while the names of some of these artificers have come down to us without any of their workmanship. In a private collection, Langbaine had gathered about a thousand plays, besides interludes and drolls; and yet these were but a portion of those plays, for many never passed through the press: the list of anonymous authors is not only considerable, but some of these are not inferior in invention and style to the best.* We may judge of the prolific production of these authors by THOMAS HEYWOOD, a fluent and natural writer, who never allowed himself time to cross out a line, and who has casually informed us that "he had either an entire hand, or at least a main finger, in two hundred and twenty plays."

The intercourse of the proprietors or managers of the theatres and these writers has been only incidentally, and indeed accidentally, revealed to us.† It was justly observed

Tragedy." To the personal distresses of the actors in the days of the Commonwealth we owe several dramas which they published, drawn out of the wrecks of some theatrical treasury: such was "the Wild-goose Chase" of FLETCHER, which they assured us was the poet's favorite. It is said that more than sixty of these plays, in manuscript, were collected by Warburton, the herald; and, from the utter neglect of the collector, had all gone to singe his fowls. When THEOBALD solemnly declared that his play, "the Double Falsehood," was written by Shakspeare, it was probably one of these old manuscript-plays. This drama was not unsuccessful; nor had Theobald shot far wide of the mark, since Farmer ascribed it to Shirley, and Malone to Massinger.

* See the last and enlarged edition of Charles Lamb's "Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets." In the second volume, in "Extracts from the Garrick Plays," under the odd names of "Doctor Dodypol, a Comedy," 1600, we have scenes exquisitely fanciful; and "Jack Drum's Entertainment," 1601, where "the free humor of a noble housekeeper" may be placed by the side of the most finished passages even in Shakspeare. Yet "Doctor Dodypol" has wholly escaped the notice even of catalogue-scribes, and "Jack Drum" is not noticed by the collectors of these old plays. I only know these two dramas by the excerpts of Lamb; but, if the originals are tolerably equal with "the Specimens," I should place these unknown dramas among the most interesting ones.

† By the discovery of the Diary of Henslow, the illiterate manager of the theatre, connected with Edward Alleyn. Henslow was the pawnbroker of the company, and the chancellor of its exchequer. He could not spell

by Gifford, that these dramatic poets, either from mortification or humility, abstained from dwelling or even entering upon their personal history. Though frequent in dedications, they are seldom explicit; and even their prefaces fail to convey any information, except of their wants or their grievances, from evils which are rarely specified. The truth is, that this whole poetical race, which suddenly broke out together, a sort of wild insurrection of genius, early found that they were nothing more than the hirelings of some crafty manager, at whose beck and mercy they lived. Writing plays was soon held to be as discreditable an occupation as that of the players themselves: indeed, not seldom the poets themselves were actors, — these departments were so frequently combined, that the term "player" is sometimes used equally for a performer on the stage and a writer of plays.

This fraternity, children of ill-fortune and of passion, were scarce distinguishable from each other; and, if the fortunes and the fate of some are more known, it is but by the recklessness of their days, — their criminal impetuosity. Several perished in their immaturity, torches blazing, while they were consuming themselves. The chance-record of the violent end of one, a cry of desperation still more horrible of another, the death-bed repentance of a third, the dishonorable life of dupery probably practised by a fourth,* are adapted to enter into moral if not into literary history.

The psychologist, the historian of the soul among the brotherhood of genius, — for such were many among them, — feels how precious are the slight memorials of noble passions disguised by a degraded existence. However tortuous their lives seem, some grasped at celebrity, and some looked towards

the titles of the plays; yet, in about five years, a hundred and sixty were his property. He had not less than thirty different authors in his pay. — *Collier*, iii. 105. [His Diary has been published by the Shakspeare Society, under the editorship of Mr. Payne Collier. — Ed.]

* Marlowe, Nash, Greene, Peele.

distant fame. If some have eloquently reproached themselves, there are, too, those who exulted in the consciousness of their intellectual greatness. They were of different magnitude; and, in the scroll of their names, some have been recognized by posterity.

An ungenial critic has morosely censured Robert Greene, who, harbored in an obscure lodging which a poor man's charity had yielded, when lying on his death-bed, prayed for the last favor that poor man's charity could bestow on a miserable but a conscious poet, — that his coffin might be covered with bays. In the shadow of death, the poet and the romancer dwelt on the fame which he cherished as life.

Even their small theatres appeared to the poet "thronged," and the heart of the dramatist would swell at "the shouts and claps." Drayton, who at a later day joined in several dramas, has perpetuated this rejoicing of the poet, which he himself had experienced in that small world, "the proud round" of the Globe Theatre. It is a sonnet in the collection which he has entitled "Idea," and which no successful dramatist will read without some happy emotion.

"In pride of wit, when *high desire of fame*
Gave life and courage to my labouring pen,
And first the sound and vertue of my name
Were grace and credit in the ears of men;
With those the *thronged theaters* that presse,
I in *the circuit* for the Lawrell strove,
Where the *full praise*, I freely must confesse,
In heate of blood and modest minde might move;
With SHOWTS *and* CLAPS *at every little* PAWSE,
When the *prowd* ROUND *on everie side hath rung*."

The ample roll might not be tedious, though it were long, had we aught to record of this brotherhood of genius: but nothing we know of the much-applauded and much-ridiculed and most ingenious JOHN LYLY; nothing of the searching and cynical MARSTON; nothing of the inventive and flowing DECKER; nothing of the unpremeditated strains of the fertile

HEYWOOD; nor of the pathetic WEBSTER; nor of MIDDLETON, from whose "Witch" Shakspeare borrowed his incantations; nor of ROWLEY, whom Shakspeare aided; nor of the equal and grave MASSINGER; nor of the lonely and melancholy FORD.

Among these poets stood he, in whose fire the Greek of Homer burned clear in his Homeric English. Chapman often caught the ideas of Homer, and went on writing Homerically, at once the translator and the original. One may read in that "most reverend aspect" of his the lofty spirit that told how, above all living, was to him the poet's life, when he exclaimed, —

> "The work that I was born to do is done!
> The conclusion
> Makes the beginning of my life; for never
> Let me be said to live, till I live ever." *

The plays were bought by a manager for his company, and each company was jealously alive that no other should perform their purchased copies. These monopolists were, therefore, anxious to suppress the publication of plays, and to smother the fame of their dramatist on their own boards. The players, who were usually copartners, at the sovereign pleasure of their proprietorship, unmercifully mutilated the

* When Pope translated Homer, Chapman's version lay open before him. The same circumstance, as I have witnessed, occurred with the last translator, — Mr. Sotheby. Charles Lamb justly appreciated Chapman, when he observed that "he would have made a great epic poet, if indeed he has not abundantly shown himself to be one; for his "Homer" is not so properly a translation as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses rewritten. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems would be incredible to a reader of more modern translations."

The striking portrait of Chapman is prefixed to Mr. Singer's elegant edition of this poet's version of Homer's "Battle of the Frogs and the Mice," and the Hymns. His "Iliad," collated with his last corrections and alterations, well deserves to fill a stationary niche in our poetical library. Chapman has, above all our poets, most boldly, or most gracefully, struck out those "words that burn," — compound epithets.

tender limbs of their poet,* or, what was not less usual, made him for ever ridiculous, by foisting in whole scenes of the basest humor, as clap-traps for "the groundlings," and which sometimes were perpetuated in the prompter's copy. Such scenes of ribaldry have tainted even immortal pages, and have provoked much idle criticism, either to censure or to palliate.

As the stock-copies increased, and lost their novelty, they required some new-fashioning. The tarnished piece was drawn out of the theatrical wardrobe: once in vogue, and now neglected, the body, not yet moth-eaten, might be flounced with new scenes. To this humiliated state of jobbers of old plays were reduced the most glorious names in our drama's roll. Shakspeare, Jonson, and Massinger sate down to this obscure drudgery. Our earlier commentators on Shakspeare had no suspicion that even his plays were often *rifacimentos* of neglected stock-copies. When the account-books of Henslow, the manager, were discovered at Dulwich College, they supplied some strange literary anecdotes. This entry appears: "Lent to Bengemen Jonson forty shillings for his adycions to Jeronymo," which was an old favorite play of Kyd's. Again, more lent for "new adycions." When Hawkins republished "Jeronymo" in his collection, he triumphantly rejected these "adycions," as being "foisted in by the players." This he had detected by collation with the first edition: further his critical decision could not advance. The Diary of Henslow was fatal to the matter-of-fact critic: the passages he had ejected relate to the madness of Hieronymo for the murder of his son. The learned poet never wrote with such a Shakspearian force.

* An original leaf of the manuscript of one of Marlowe's plays, in the possession of Mr. J. P. Collier, is a singular literary curiosity. On a collation with the printed copy, the mutilations are not only excessive, but betray a defective judgment. An elaborate speech, designed by the poet to develop the character of the famous Guise, was cut down to four meagre lines. — *Annals of the Stage*, iii. 134.

Our early dramatists not only jobbed in this chance-work, but established a copartnership for the quicker manufacture; and we find sometimes three or four poets working on one play, share and share alike, or in due proportions, whenever they could peaceably adjust their mutual celebrities.* Could we penetrate into the recesses of the theatre of that day, I suspect we should discover civil wars in the commonwealth. These partners sometimes became irreconcilably jealous. Jonson and Marston and Decker, who had zealously co-operated, subsequently exhausted their quivers at one another. Greene was incurably envious of Marlowe, and got his friend Nash to be as much so, till Marlowe and Nash compromised, and wrote together the tragedy of "Dido," with the affection of twins. Lofty Chapman flashed an "invective" against proud "Ben;" and when Anthony Munday, a copious playwright, was hailed by a critic as "the best plotter," Jonson, in his next *play*, ridiculed "the best plotter." Can we forget that in "Eastward Hoe," one of the most amusing of our old comedies, whence Hogarth borrowed the hint of his "Idle and Industrious Apprentices," by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, the madness of Ophelia is poorly ridiculed? It would seem that a junction of the poets usually closed in a rupture.

Our first tragedy and comedy were moulded on the classical model; for both the writers were university-men. It is, however, remarkable that the greater number of our early

* Charles Lamb has alluded to this fact; and, in one of his moments of enthusiasm, exclaims, "This was the noble practice of these times." Would not the usual practice of a man of genius, working his own drama, be "nobler"? We presume the unity of feeling can only emanate from a single mind. In the instance here alluded to, we should often deceive ourselves if we supposed, from the combination of names which appear on the old titlepages, that those who are specified were always *simultaneously employed* in the new direction of the same play. Poets were often called in to alter the old or to supply the new, which has occasioned incongruities which probably were not to be found in the original state.

dramatists who now occupy our attention were also members of the universities, had taken a degree, and some were skilful Greek scholars.* How then did it happen, that not one of these scholars submitted to the artificial apparatus, and the conventional code of their legislator, the Stagyrite? We observe a sudden revolution in the dramatic art.

Our poets had not to address scholastic critics; for, as one of them has delivered himself,—

> "They would have GOOD PLAYS, and not produce
> Such musty fopperies of antiquity;
> Which do not suit the humorous age's back
> With clothes in fashion."

It was their business to raise up that multiform shape which alone could win the mutable attention of a very mixed audience. At once they clung to the human nature before them; they ran through all the chords of the passions: mingling the comic with the tragic, they struck out a new course in their inartificial drama. They were, at all events, inventors; for they had no prototypes. Every poet was an original, *more suo*, mindless of the encumbering alloy; for they knew that the vein they had opened was their own, and confided too frequently in its abundance to find its richness. It was a spontaneous burst which broke forth in the excitement of these new times, and which, as far as the careless prodigality of the vernacular genius is concerned, in the raciness of its idiom, and the flow of its conceptions, and the freshness of its imagery, can never return; for the virgin genius of a people must pass away!

Valueless, indeed, was our early drama held by graver men. Sir Thomas Bodley wholly rejected from his great library all plays, "to avoid stuffing it with baggage-books;" but more particularly objected to "ENGLISH PLAYS, *as unlike those of other nations*, which are esteemed for learning

* Greene, Nash, Lyly, Peele, and Marston were from the university: Marlowe and Chapman were exquisite translators from the Greek.

the languages; and many of them," he adds, "are compiled by men of great wisdom and learning."

The perplexities of the founder of the noble Bodleian Library were occasioned by our dramatic illegitimacy: we had no progenitors, and we were not spell-bound by the three unities. Originality in every kind startled the mind which could only pace in the trammels of authority. On the principle Bodley rejected our *English plays*, he also condemned our *English philosophy;* and Lord Bacon rallied him on that occasion by a good-humored menace of "a cogitation against libraries," which must have made the cheeks of the great collector of books tingle. Bodley with excellent truth described himself as "the carrier's horse which cannot blench the beaten way in which I was trained."

In banishing the productions of the national genius from that national library which his hand had proudly erected, little was Bodley able to conceive, that a following generation would dwell on those very "English plays," would appeal to them as the depositories of our language, and as the secret history of the people, — a history which no historian writes, — their modes of thinking in the transition of their manners, in the vicissitudes of their passions, and in the scenes of their politics and their religion; and, what most would have astonished our great *bibliophile*, that collectors like himself, presuming on "their wisdom and learning," would devote their vigils to collate, to comment, and to edit "these baggage-books of English plays;" and, above all, that foreigners, after a century or two, should enrich their own literature by the translations, or enlarge their own genius by the imitations, of these bold originals.

By emancipating themselves from the thraldom of Greece and the servility of Rome, our dramatists have occasioned later critics to separate our own from the classical drama of antiquity. They are placed in "the Romantic" school, — a novel technical term, not individually appropriate, and which

would be less ambiguous if considered as "the Gothic."* At the time when Italy and France had cast themselves into thraldom by adhering to the contracted models of the drama of antiquity, two nations in Europe, without any intercourse whatever (for even translation was not yet a medium), were spontaneously creating a national drama accordant with the experience, the sympathies, and the imagination of their people. The theatre was to be a mirror of enchantment, a movable reflection of themselves. These two nations were England and Spain. The dramatic history of Spain is the exact counterpart which perfectly tallies with our own. In Spain, the learned began with imitations and translations of the ancient classics: but these formal stately dramas were so coldly received, that they fell into desuetude, and were succeeded by those whose native luxuriant genius reached to the secret hearts of their audience; and it was this second race, not indeed so numerous as our own, who closed with the Spanish Shakspeare.† This literary phenomenon, though now apparent, was not perceived when it was occurring.

Every taste has delivered its variable decision on these our old plays, each deciding by its own standard; and the variance is occasioned not always by deficiency in critical judgment, but, in the very nature of the object of criticism, in the inherent defect of our ancient drama itself. These old plays will not endure criticism. They were not written for critics, and they now exist even in spite of criticism. They were all

* The term, "the Romantic school," is derived from the *langue Romane*, or *Romane;* under which comprehensive title all the modern languages may be included, formed, as they are, out of the wrecks of the Latin or *Roman* language. However this may apply to the origin of the *languages*, the term is not expressive of the *genius* of the people. In the common sense of the term "Romantic," the "Æneid" of Virgil is as much a romance as that of Arthur and his knights. The term "Romantic school" is, therefore, not definite. By adopting the term *Gothic*, in opposition to the *Classical*, we fix the origin, and indicate the species.

† Bouterwek's Hist. of Spanish Lit., i. 128.

experiments of the freest genius, rarely placed under favoring circumstances. They were emanations of strong but short conceptions, poured forth in haste and heat; they blotted their lines as rarely as we are told did Shakspeare; they revelled in their first conceptions, often forgotten in their rapid progress: the true inspiration was lodged in their breasts; the hidden volcano has often burst through its darkness, and flamed through a whole scene; for often have they written as Shakspeare wrote. We may look in them for entire scenes, felicitous lines, and many an insulated passage, — studies for a poet: anthologies have been drawn from these elder dramatists.* We may perceive how this sudden generation of poets,

* Two of these collections are to be valued.

COTGRAVE'S "English Treasury of Wit and Language," 1655. He neglected to furnish the names of the dramatic writers from whom he drew the passages. Oldys, with singular diligence, succeeded in recovering these numerous sources, which I transcribed from his manuscript notes. Oldys's copy should now repose in the library of Mr. Douce, given to the Bodleian.

A collection incomparably preferable to all preceding ones is "the British Muse, or a Collection of Thoughts — Moral, Natural, or Sublime — of our English Poets who flourished in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," by THOMAS HAYWARD, gent., 1732, in three volumes. It took a new title, not a new edition, as "the Quintessence of English Poetry." Such a title could not recommend itself. The prefatory matter was designed for a critical history of all these anthologies, and was the work of Oldys; but it was miserably mangled by Dr. Campbell, then the Aristarchus of the booksellers, to save print and paper! Our literary antiquary has vented, in a manuscript note, his agony and his indignation. He had also greatly assisted the collector: the circuit is wide and copious, and there is not a name of note which does not appear in these volumes. The ethical and poetic powers of our old dramatic poets, as here displayed, I doubt could be paralleled by our literary neighbors. We were a thoughtful people at the time that our humor was luxuriant; as lighter gayety was, from the first, the national inheritance of France.

Of this collection, says Oldys, "Wherever you open it, you are in the heart of your subject. Every leaf includes many lessons, and is a system of knowledge in a few lines. The merely speculative may here find experience; the flattered, truth; the diffident, resolution," &c. For my part, I think of these volumes as highly as Oldys himself.

But what has occasioned the little success of these collections of single passages and detached beauties, like collections of proverbs, is the confusion

some of whose names are not familiar to us, have moulded our language with the images of their fancy, and strengthened it by the stability of their thoughts.

of their variety. We are pleased at every glance; till the eye, in weariness, closes over the volume which we neglect to re-open.

CHARLES LAMB'S "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets" is of deeper interest. He was a nobler workman, and he carries us on through whole scenes by a true unerring emotion. His was a poetical mind laboring in poetry.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE vicissitudes of the celebrity of Shakespeare may form a chapter in the philosophy of literature and the history of national opinions. Shakespeare was destined to have his dramatic faculty contested by many successful rivals, to fall into neglect, to be rarely acted and less read, to appear barbarous and unintelligible, to be even discarded from the glorious file of dramatists by the anathemas of hostile criticism; and finally, in the resurrection of genius, (a rare occurrence!) to emerge into universal celebrity. This literary history of Shakespeare is an incident in the history of the human mind singular as the genius which it relates to. The philosopher now contemplates the phenomenon of a poet who in his peculiar excellence is more poetical than the poets of every other people. We have to track the course of this prodigy, and, if possible, to comprehend the evolutions of this solitary luminary. It is knowledge which finally must direct our feelings in the operations of the mind as well as in the phenomena of nature. We are conscious that even the anomalous is regulated by its own proper motion, and that there is nothing in human nature so arbitrary as to stand by itself so completely insulated as to be an effect without a cause.

SHAKESPEARE is a poet who is always now separated from other poets, and the only one, except POPE, whose thoughts are familiar to us as household words. His eulogy has exhausted the language of every class of enthusiasts, the learned and the unlearned, the profound and the fantastical. The

writings of this greatest of dramatists are, as once were those of Homer, a Bible, whence we receive those other revelations of man, and of all that concerns man. There was no excess of wonder and admiration when HURD declared that "this astonishing man is the most original THINKER and SPEAKER since the days of HOMER."

The halo which surrounds the poetic beatitude has almost silenced criticism in its devotion: but a literary historian may not at all times be present in the choir of votaries; his labors lie outwards among the progressive opinions of a people, nor is he free to pass over what may seem paradoxical if it lies in his way.

The universal celebrity of Shakespeare is comparatively of recent origin: received, rejected, and revived, we must ascertain the alternate periods, and we must look for the causes of the neglect as well as the popularity of the poet. We may congratulate ourselves on the numerous escapes of our national bard from the oblivion of his dramatic brothers. The history and the works of Shakespeare, and perhaps the singularity of the poet's character in respect to his own writings, are some of the most startling paradoxes in literary history.

Malone describes Shakespeare as "the great poet whom Nature framed to disregard the wretched models that were set before him, and to create a drama from his own native and original stores." This cautious but creeping commentator, notwithstanding that he had often labored to prove the contrary, gayly shot this arrow drawn from the quiver of Dryden, who has delivered very contradictory notions of Shakespeare. Veritably — for we are now writing historically — Shakespeare never "created our drama, disregarding the wretched models before him;" far from this! the great poet had those models always before him, and worked upon them: no poet has so freely availed himself of the inventions of his predecessors; and, in reality, many of the dramas of Shakespeare had been written before he wrote.

It cannot be denied that our great poet never exercised his invention in the fables of his dramas: thus he spared himself half the toil of his work. He viewed with the prophetic eye of genius the old play or the old story, and at once discovered all its capabilities; he saw at once all that it had, and all that it had not: its characterless personages he was confident that he could quicken with breath and action; and that his own vein, allowed to flow along the impure stream, would have the force to clear the current, and to expand its own lucid beauty.

Had not the felicitous genius of our bard revelled in this facility of adopting and adapting the ready-made inventions of many a luckless playwright, we might have lost our Shakespeare; for he never wrote for us, but for his little theatre. He had no leisure to afford whole days in constructing plots for plays, nor much troubled himself with those which he followed closely even to a fault; nor did the quickness of his genius neglect a solitary thought, nor lose a fortunate expression. To what extent were these borrowings from manuscript plays, we cannot even surmise: we have one specimen of Shakespeare's free use of whatever the poet's judgment caught, in those copious passages which he transplanted from North's "Plutarch" and Holinshed's "Chronicles," lending their words his own music.

One of his commentators, George Steevens, published six old plays on which Shakespeare had grounded six of his own; but this rash act was in the early days of the commentatorship: Steevens must soon have discovered the inconvenience of printing unreadable dramas, to exhibit the concealed industry of the mighty bard. The spells of Shakespeare did not hang on the artificial edifice of his fable: he looked abroad for mankind, and within his own breast for all the impulses of the beings of his imagination. All he required was a scene: then the whole "sphere of humanity," as Jonson expressed it, lies wide before him. There was a Jew before the

Merchant of Venice; a shrew had been tamed before Katherine by Petruchio; a King Lear and his three daughters, before the only one the world knows; and a tragical Hamlet philosophized like Seneca, as the satirical Nash told, before our Shakespeare's: but this list is needless; for it would include every drama he has left us. Even the beings of his creation lie before him in their embryon state. His creative faculty never required more than a suggestion. The prototype of the wonderful Caliban has not hitherto been discovered; but the fairies of the popular mythology become the creatures of his own imagination. Middleton first opened the incantations of "the witches." The Hecate of Middleton is a mischief-brooding hag, gross and tangible; and her "spirits, black, white, and gray," with her "devil-toad, devil-ram, devil-cat, and devil-dam," disturb their spells by the familiar drollery of their names and their vulgar instincts. Out of this ordinary domestic witchcraft, the mightier poet raised "the weird sisters," —

> "That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth
> And yet are on't," —

nameless, bodiless, vanishing shadows!

> "And what seemed corporal
> Melted as breath into the wind."

The dramatic personages which seem to me peculiar to Shakespeare, and in which he evidently revelled, serving his purposes on very opposite occasions, are his clowns and domestic fools. Yet his most famous comic personage, the fat knight, was the rich graft on the miserable scion of Sir John Oldcastle, in an old play: the slight hint of "a mere pampered glutton" was idealized into that inimitable variety of human nature combined in one man, at once so despicable and so delightful!

The life of our poet remains almost a blank, and his very

name a subject of contention.* Of that singular genius who is now deemed the national bard, we can only positively ascertain that the place of his birth was that of his death; a circumstance which, for a poet, is some evidence of his domestic

* Posterity is even in some danger of losing the real name of our great dramatic poet. In the days of Shakespeare, and long after, proper names were written down as the ear caught the sound, or they were capriciously varied by the owner. It is not therefore strange that we have instances of eminent persons writing the names of intimate friends and of public characters in a manner not always to be recognized. Of this we are now furnished with the most abundant evidence, which was not sufficiently adverted to in the early times of our commentators.

The autographs we possess of our national bard are unquestionably written SHAKSPERE, according to the pronunciation of his native town: there the name was variously written, — even in the same public document, — but always regulated by the dialectical orthoepy. The marriage license of the poet, recovered in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for September, 1836, offers a striking evidence of the viciousness of the pronunciation, and the utter carelessness with which names were written; for there we find it SHAGSPERE.

That the poet himself considered that the genuine name was SHAKESPEARE, accordant with his own (a spear, the point upward), seems certain, notwithstanding his compliance with the custom of his country; for his "Rape of Lucrece," printed by himself in 1594, in the first edition bears the name of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE; as also does the "Venus and Adonis," that first heir of his invention: these first editions of his juvenile poems were doubtlessly anxiously scrutinized by the youthful bard. In the literary metropolis, the name was so pronounced. Bancroft has this allusion in his Epigrams, — "To Shakespeare:" —

> "Thou hast so used thy pen, or shook thy speare,
> That poets startle."

The well-known allusion of Robert Greene to a shake scene confirms the pronunciation. I now supply one more evidence, — that of Thomas Heywood, the intimate of Shakespeare and his brother dramatists: he, like some others, has printed the name with a hyphen, which I transcribe from the volume open before me: —

> "Mellifluous Shake-speare."
>
> *Hierarchie of Angels*, 206.

The question resolves itself into this: Is the name of our great bard to descend to posterity with the barbaric curt shock of SHAKSPERE, the twang of a provincial corruption? or, following the writers of the Elizabethan age, shall we maintain the restoration of the euphony and the truth of the name of SHAKESPEARE?

prosperity: but the glorious interval of existence, how and all he performed on the stage of human life, no one observed as differing from his fellows of the company, and he of all men the least; and of his productions, wherein we are to find every excellence to which any poet has reached, our scepticism is often at work to detect what is Shakespearian among that which cannot be.

Of the idle traditions of the youth of Shakespeare, Malone, after "foraging for anecdotes" during half a century, has painfully satisfied us that all which so many continued to repeat was apocryphal. Having with his own eyes ascertained that Sir Thomas Lucy had no park, he closed with his famous corollary, that "therefore he could have no deer to be stolen." But other parks and other deer were liable to the mischance of furnishing venison for a young deer-fancier to treat his friends; and Sir Thomas Lucy, probably, was Justice Shallow on this occasion to the poetic stripling. The other circumstances of the poet's early life, too well known to repeat, may stand on the same ground. Personal facts may come down to us confused, inaccurate, and mistaken; but they do not therefore necessarily rest on no foundation. The invention of such irrelevant circumstances seems to be without a motive; and, though the propagators of gossip are strange blunderers, they rarely aspire to be original inventors. We are not concerned with such tales; for there is nothing in them which is peculiar to the idiosyncrasy of the great poet.

The first noticeable incident in the life of Shakespeare was his marriage in 1582, in his eighteenth year: the nuptials of the poet seem an affair of domestic convenience, rather than a poetical incident in "the romance of life."

In 1586, being only twenty-two years of age, Shakespeare quitted home for the metropolis.

At this critical moment of his life, which Malone sought for in despair, we should have remained in darkness, had not the unfortunate and intrepid industry of the most devoted enthu-

siast of the Shakespearian school lifted his steady torch.* Shakespeare arrived at the theatre, not to hold the horses of gentlemen, as was so long reported, without, for he had a more friendly interest within, doors. There he joined a neighbor in his shire, Richard Burbage, who subsequently became the renowned actor of the future Shakespeare's creations; and likewise Thomas Greene, his townsman, and no inferior actor and poet. It is hardly a conjecture to presume that their friendly invitations had tempted our youthful adventurer to join their company. In three years, Shakespeare obtained shares in the theatre; which multiplied every year, till he became the joint-proprietor with Burbage. The friendship of the actor and the dramatist was a golden bond, when each had conferred on the other their mutual popularity. The plays of Shakespeare were higher favorites with the public during the lifetime of this Garrick of the poet's own days; and the renowned actor was so charmed by his own success, that he perpetuated among his daughters the delightful name of Juliet, which reminded him, with pride, of his own exquisite Romeo.

Shakespeare proved a closer and a more refined observer of the art of acting than Nature had enabled him to show himself as an actor, by practising his own professional precepts. Two actors, who long survived the poet, recorded that he had critically instructed the one to enact Hamlet, and the other Henry the Eighth.†

How in an indifferent actor like Shakespeare was betrayed those latent dramatic faculties by which he was one day to be the delight of that stage which he could not tread, remains a secret which the poet has not told. But whether it was by accident, or in some happy hour, we know not, that Shakespeare, in conning the manuscript of some wretched drama,

* Mr. J. Payne Collier, in his "New Facts regarding the Life of Shakespeare."

† Roscius Anglicanus. They were Richard Burbage and John Lowin.

felt the glorious impulse which prompted the pen to strike out whole passages, and to interpolate whole scenes: that moment was the obscure birth of his future genius. How he was employed at this unknown era of his life, the peevish jealousy of a brother of the craft has curiously informed us.

When Shakespeare was a name yet scarcely known, save to that mimetic world tenanted by playwrights, it appears that he was there sustaining an active and secret avocation. The great bard had been serving a silent apprenticeship to the dramatic Muse, by trying his hand on the old stockpieces which lay in the theatrical treasury, and further venturing his repolishing touches on the new. Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele had submitted to his soft pencillings or his sharp pruning-hook. The actors were often themselves a sort of poets, and would compete with those who were only poets; and, in pricing the hasty wares, would often have them fashioned to their liking. Alluding to the treatment the dramatists were enduring from their masters, Robert Greene indignantly addressed his peers. This curious passage, first discovered by Tyrwhit, has been often quoted, and indispensably must be once more; for it tells us how Shakespeare, in 1592, had been fully employed within six years of his arrival at the metropolis. Greene desires his friends would no longer submit to the actors. "Do not trust those burrs, who have sought to cleave to us all; those puppets that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colors. Is it not strange that I, to whom they have all been beholding, is it not like that you, to whom they all, too, have been beholding, shall, were ye in that case I am now, be both of them at once forsaken?* Yes, trust them not! There is *an upstart crow beautified with our feathers*, that, with *his tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide*,

* Greene was then lying on his last pallet of rhyme and misery, dictating this sad legacy of "a groat's worth of wit bought with a million of repentance."

supposes he is as well able to *bombast** *out a blank verse* as the best of you, and, being *an absolute Johannes Factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only SHAKE-SCENE in a country."

"The absolute Johannes Factotum," "the only shake-scene," and "the crow beautified with their feathers," are one person; but "the tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide" particularly points out that person. It is, in fact, a parody of a line composed by this batch of poets in one of their dramas, "the Contention of the Two Houses of York and Lancaster;" and which, with many others, Shakespeare had wholly appropriated. In the third part of "King Henry the Sixth," in act i., scene iv., it stands as Peele or Greene had originally composed it:—

"O tyger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide!"

This attack on our untiger-like Shakespeare turns poor Greene into an enraged wasp, peevish and mortified at the Shakespearian hand which had often larded his leanness, or scarified his tumidities. Greene charges Shakespeare with altering the plays of himself, Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, and then claiming all the merit of the work!†

Our great bard was not insensible to the fancy of his querulous libeller, since it was on Greene's "Dorastus and Fawnia" Shakespeare founded his "Winter's Tale;" as he took his "As you Like it" from Lodge's "Rosalynd," whose very name he preserved. Thus borrowing from the writings of his unfortunate and reckless brothers of Parnassus, he has made immortal, works which have long expired.

The active employment of Shakespeare among the old plays was so well known at the time, that, when his name became familiar to the public, the printers were often eager to obtain

* *Bombast* is not here used in the present application of the term, in a depreciating sense, but is a simile derived from the cotton used in stuffing out or quilting the fashionable dresses.

† Collier's "New Facts," 13; Dyce's edition of "Greene's Dramatic Works."

the original neglected plays in their meagre condition, to avail themselves of the popularity of the Shakespearian *rifacimentos*. Fraud and deception were evidently practised on the uncritical readers. One of these cunning publishers issued the old play of "the Contention of the Two Houses," &c., as *newly corrected and enlarged* by William Shakespeare; which was true as it was acted on the stage, but false in the copy of the elder dramatist which was republished. In this manner, several plays not only bear the consecrating name of Shakespeare, but seven which are now discarded from his works, appeared in the edition of Rowe: in some of these, the hand of Shakespeare appears to have been discerned; and it has been suggested by Mr. Collier, an experienced critic in the history of the drama, that it is possible that all the plays of Shakespeare have not yet been given to the world.

In the second and third parts of "King Henry the Sixth" (for the first was placed in his volume merely to complete the historical series), Shakespeare made ample use of several dramas; and Malone, whose microscopic criticism obtained for him the sarcastic cognomen of "Minutius Felix," by an actual scrutiny, which we may well believe cost him the most anxious pains, computed the lines of these dramas, and has passed his word, that, of six thousand and forty-three lines, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one were written by some author who preceded Shakespeare, two thousand three hundred and seventy-three were formed by him on the foundation laid by his predecessors, and one thousand eight hundred and forty-nine lines were entirely our poet's own composition. Malone has even contrived to distinguish them in the text: those which Shakespeare *adopted* are printed in the usual manner; the speeches which he *altered* or expanded are marked by inverted commas; and to all the lines entirely *composed* by himself, asterisks are prefixed. A critical reader may derive a curious gratification by attending to this novel text of our national poet; the only dramatist to whom this singularity has ever

occurred, and on whose writings this anomalous operation could have been performed.

Shakespeare was more conversant with these preceding dramatists, most of whose writings have perished, than we can ever discover; but it is fortunate for us that his creative faculties brooded over such a world of chaotic genius. He scrupled not to appropriate those happier effusions which were not only worthy of his own genius, but are not distinguishable from it. Sometimes he only retouched, sometimes he nobly amplified, expanding a slight hint into some glorious passage, and elevating a creeping dialogue into an impassioned scene. His judgment was always the joint-workman of his fancy.

Who by the interior evidence could have conjectured that the following Shakesperian effusion, musical with his own music, was, in truth, a mere transcription from an old play of "Richard, Duke of York," whose author remains unknown? I mark by Italics the rejections of Shakespeare. In the slight emendations, we may observe that our poet consulted his ear; but, in the first verse, he has chosen a more expressive term.

"Doves will peck in *rescue* (safeguard) of their brood.
Unreasonable creatures feed their young;
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,
Who hath not seen them, even with those *same* wings
Which *they have sometimes* used *in* fearful flight,
(Which sometime they have used with fearful flight),
Make war with him that climbed unto their nest,
Offering their own lives in their young's defence?"

The speech of Queen Margaret, in the third part of "Henry the Sixth," act v., scene iv., in the old play, consisted of a single metaphor included in twelve lines. The single metaphor was not rejected; but it is amplified and nobly sustained through forty lines in the queen's animated address to the lords:—

"The mast but now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding anchor lost," &c.

The two celebrated scenes in which the dead body of the murdered Duke of Gloster is placed before us, with such precision of horror, minutely appalling, and of the raving despair of Cardinal Beaufort so awfully depicted by his death, "making no sign," are splendors whose igniting sparks flew out of the ashes of old plays, one of "King John," and the other of "the Contentions of the Two Houses," and of the chronicles. But still these sublime descriptions and these fearful images are the inspirations of Shakespeare: their truth of nature, and the completeness of the purpose of the poet, the bare originals could not impart.

These ascertained evidences may suffice — it would be tedious to proceed with their abundance — of the studiousness and propriety of Shakespeare in his adoptions and adaptations of our earlier drama. Dr. Farmer was the first to discover that these plays were not written *originally* by Shakespeare; but that able researcher was not then aware of what only the progress of discovery could demonstrate, — that hardly a single drama of our national bard can be deemed to have been of his own original invention.

While thus occupied in altering and writing old plays for his own theatre, in 1593 first appeared to the world the name of William Shakespeare, in the dedication to the Earl of Southampton of his "Venus and Adonis." The poet has called this poem of a few pages "the first heir of my invention." For him who had already written much, the expression is singular; and it looks like a tacit acknowledgment, that the poet considered that the five or six plays which he had already set forth had really no claim to "*his* invention." And the dedication betrays the tremulousness of a virgin effort: "Should this first heir prove deformed," declared our poet in his own Shakespearian diction, "I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after *ear so barren a land*, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest." The poet, doubtless, was induced to proceed; for the following year, 1594, produced his

"Lucrece." He described his first poem as "unpolished lines;" and he still calls his second his "untutored lines." As the former, so likewise is the present dedicated to the same earl. The fervor of the style indicates the influence of the patron, and the singleness of the devotion of the poet, who tells his noble patron, "What I have done is yours, and what I have to do is yours." The humble actor's intercourse with his noble friend is a remarkable incident; for the poet was not yet famous when he prefixed his name to these poems. This earl, then in his youth, we learn was attached to theatrical amusements; and it has been ingeniously conjectured, that the princely donation of a thousand pounds, which the peer presented to the poet, — a tradition which Davenant had handed down, — may have occurred, if it ever happened, in the interval between the publication of these two poems.

The Ovidian deliciousness of "Venus and Adonis," and the more solemn narrative of "Tarquin and Lucrece," early obtained celebrity among the youthful and impassioned generation. Shakespeare was long renowned as the amatory poet of the nation by many who had not learned to distinguish the bard among his dramatic brethren. Numerous editions of these poems confirm their popularity, and the public voice resounded from the lyres of many poets.

No poet more successfully opened his career than Shakespeare by these two popular poems; but it is remarkable that he made no farther essay with a view to permanent fame, which, as it would seem to us, he never imagined he was to derive from his dramas.

Meres, a critic of the day, has informed us, that, in 1598, some sonnets by Shakespeare were in circulation among his friends. These were effusions of the hour; and possibly some may have been descriptive of his own condition. In 1599, a poetical collection, called "the Passionate Pilgrim," appeared under the name of Shakespeare; and ten years afterwards another, entitled "Shakespeare's Sonnets," was given to

the world: but, as poetical miscellanies were formed in those days by publishers who were not nice in the means they used to procure manuscripts, it is quite uncertain what are genuine and what may be the composition of other writers in these collections.

In "the Passionate Pilgrim," some critics find difficulty in tracing the hand of the poet; and we accidentally discover by the complaint of Heywood, a congenial dramatist, that there were two of his poems in one edition of this collection; and we know that there were also other poems by Marlowe and Barnefield and others. Heywood tells us that Shakespeare was greatly offended at this licentious use of his name;* but he must have been imperturbably careless on such matters, otherwise he would not have suffered three editions of this spurious miscellany.

The fate of "the Sonnets" is remarkable. Steevens boldly ejected them from the poet's works, declaring that the strongest act of Parliament that could be framed could not compel their perusal. Shall we ascribe to this caustic wit a singular deficiency in his judicial decisions, or look to some other cause for the ejection of these sonnets, which have become of late the subject of so much curious inquiry? An ingenious attempt has been recently made to form what is called an autobiography of the poet, by stringing together the sonnets in six distinct poems: this would be sufficient evidence that they had never passed under the eye of the author, and that he could have had no concern in a publication which has thus mutilated his living members. This bookseller's collection remains for more than one cause an ambiguous volume.

Shakespeare now stands alone the national bard: but hoary Time, which has decreed who are his inferiors, once saw them his equals; and, when he mingled with his fellows, possibly the world looked up to a Coryphæus whose name was not Shake-

* Heywood's "Apology for Actors." — The epistle to his bookseller, at the end.

speare. Two inquiries interest us: Was the pre-eminence of our national bard acknowledged by his contemporaries?—and what cause occasioned the utter neglect of his own reputation?

Among his contemporaries, Shakespeare could not possess the pre-eminence of the present age; for who were then to be his judges?—his rivals, or his audience? Our gentle Shakespeare, as Jonson called him, perhaps at no time appreciated his own genius at its peculiar excellence, and therefore was not likely to discover his solitary pre-eminence among a formidable crowd of rivals; nor were they likely to acknowledge in their friend "Will" the prevailing charm which has now subdued the world. They have even occasionally darted a shaft of ridicule or a sharp parody at our immortal tragedian; the madness of Hamlet and Ophelia could serve these dramatic writers as a subject for raillery;* and the airy Fletcher, who would have emulated Shakespeare, was guilty of sneering at his inimitable master. The learned JONSON was apt to be critical; CHAPMAN cast his Greek glances haughtily on the vernacular bard; MARSTON was caustic; and DRAYTON, his intimate, who had composed two or three tragedies, could hardly perceive any supremacy in SHAKESPEARE, and, for us, seems parsimoniously to commend his "comic vein" as strong—

> "As any one that trafficked with the stage;"—

while BEN JONSON is hailed as—

> "Lord of the theatre, who could bear
> The buskin, as the sock, away."

It was not from his dramatic brothers that SHAKESPEARE could have discovered his more than supremacy; and, while the brotherhood had family quarrels among themselves, Shake-

* In the comedy of "Eastward Ho!" the joint production of Jonson, Marlowe, and Chapman, Shakespeare is ridiculed, particularly the madness of Hamlet and Ophelia.

speare appears never to have moved offensively or defensively. Gifford tells us that he has never mentioned one of his contemporaries with commendation; and only once appears, with Jonson and others, to have contributed some commendatory lines to the volume of an obscure and whimsical poet.* As Shakespeare did not deal in this literary traffic of that day, he has received fewer tributes than some of the meanest of our poets. But if Shakespeare has not noticed any of his associates, neither has the poet ever alluded to himself in his works. He never exults in his triumphs, nor is querulous on those who oppugned them.

With his audience he was unquestionably popular: we hear of none of his plays having been condemned; though such mischances are recorded of his rivals, and, above all, of his great compeer Jonson. We know that he was fortunate in the personation of his characters; and those natural touches, listened to on the spot, when Nature was left free to act her part, fell on contagious and instantaneous sympathies. But, if the poet charmed by his "many-colored life," his very faults were not less delightful. His audience revelled in bustle and bombast; and it is possibly in compliance with their stirring unchastised taste that we have received so much of his rude originals.

Our poet's recklessness of the fate of his own dramas, and his utter disregard of posterity, is at least one unquestionable fact in the blank page of his life. He was utterly reckless of his personal reputation among his contemporary readers, or otherwise he would not have suffered in his lifetime mutilated dramas, or even their first draughts, surreptitiously procured, to pass under his own name, — huddled pieces without even

* Robert Chester, a fantastical versifier, whose volume is priced in the "Bib. Anglo-Poetica" at £50: but this price was too moderate; for, at the sale of Sir M. Sykes, some ingenious lover of absurd poetry willingly gave £61. 19s. I have not yet seen this extraordinary production, and derive my knowledge only from a specimen in the catalogue.

the divisions of the acts, or crude and ridiculous dramas which he was incapable of having written. These were suicidal acts of his own fame, but they never broke his silence; and even in his retreat from the metropolis, in the leisure of his native bowers of Avon, Shakespeare felt not —

> "That last infirmity of noble minds,
> The spur of fame," —

pricking his patient acquiescence, and disturbing his careless freedom; he issued no protest, he uttered no complaint, against the effrontery of the printers of those days, who published, as "newly corrected by William Shakespeare," old plays which he never wrote; nor did he yield the yearnings of a nurse to those rickety children of the press which passed as his progeny, bearing a name which he never could have deemed immortal. We may trace to its real cause this utter carelessness of his poetical existence.

The horizon of this poet's hopes was bounded by his daily task and his prosperous theatre. Assuredly it was not an ordinary gratification to be conscious that his friend Burbage would call into a real existence "Romeo," "Macbeth," and "Othello," and that the shares of the play-house would in due time be transferred for Warwickshire acres. But his mind was above his condition; and, however the dramatist flourished at "the Globe," Shakespeare himself felt the misery of a degraded station: players and play-writing were held to be equally despicable in that day. This "secret sorrow" he may have himself confided to us: for, in one of "the sonnets," he pathetically laments the compulsion which forced him to the trade of pleasing the public; and this humiliation, or this "stain," as the poet felt it, is illustrated by a novel image. "Chide Fortune," exclaims the bard, —

> "The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds:

Thence comes it that *my name receives a brand;*
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, LIKE THE DYER'S HAND."

SHAKESPEARE, in the vigor of life, withdrew from the theatre and the metropolis, returning to his native abode.* "The properties and the wardrobe" were now exchanged for "land and tithes." It is consolatory for us to have ascertained, that our national bard, not yet, however, national, did not participate in the common misery of his noblest brothers. Four years glided away in the tranquil obscurity of his family, till his death! Yet still some old associations survived with the dramatic bard, some reveries of the winter theatre of "the Blackfriars," and the summer Globe "open to the sky;" for we are told that two or three of his noblest dramas were composed during his retirement: and he retained his unbroken love for old companionship to the last; for, by a credible tradition, Shakespeare died of a fever contracted by convivial indulgence at a joyous meeting with his beloved cronies, Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton.

We hear nothing more of SHAKESPEARE, nor of any fragmentary manuscripts: no verses were scattered on his funereal bier, as with Spenser; no sepulchral volume of elegies was gathered, as with Jonson, to consecrate his memory. There was yet no SHAKESPEARE! no national bard! The poet himself could not have favored a friend with a copy of many of his own plays, and probably could not himself have repeated one of those admired soliloquies which we now get by rote. SHAKESPEARE was wholly insensible to the days which were to come. All this to us seems incredible!

Seven years passed away silently, and the nation remained without their Shakespeare; although Jonson, in the very year that the poet had deceased, had set the first example of a collection of dramas made by their own author: the volume

* In 1612 or 13.

sanctioned by his critical learning he dignified as his "works;" a proud distinction, by which he laid himself open to the epigrammatists. At length, in 1623, two of Shakespeare's fellow-comedians, Heminges and Condell, published the first folio edition of "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies."

These player-editors profess that "they have done this office to the dead only to keep the memory of so worthy a *friend and fellow* alive as was our Shakespeare." Yet their utter negligence shown in "their fellow's" volume is no evidence of their pious friendship, nor perhaps of their care or their intelligence. The publication was not, I fear, so much an offering of affection as a pretext to secure the copyright. Their real design seems to have been to recover the monopoly of ALL the plays, having lost the proprietorship of several which had *stolen abroad in Shakespeare's lifetime;* and, to obtain this crafty purpose, they practised a fraudulent deception.

Fifteen quarto plays the public already possessed: no one appears to have known how they had issued from the study of the poet or the treasury of the theatre. Our player-editors, however, now cautioned their readers that these fifteen plays were a fraud practised on them; that "they were stolen and surreptitious copies maimed and deformed." But what these new editors themselves alleged, they knew was false; for they actually reprinted, unaltered, in their own collection, these declared surreptitious copies. As the reprint became subject to their negligence, these *first editions* were appreciated by Capel and Malone as manuscripts, and by these quarto plays they corrected the text of the folio volume. The mystifying republication of these fifteen quarto plays is a piece of literary history of no common occurrence. CAPEL imagined that the player-editors merely reprinted these very copies which they had so loudly decried to save the labor of transcription. But, looking closer into this affair, we seem to

detect that a double deception was practised. The printers of these plays had secured the copyright by entering them at Stationers' Hall; and, when the folio collection was projected, it was found necessary by Heminges and Condell to admit the proprietors into the copartnership of the volume. Hence their names appear in the titlepage. Malone imagined that this circumstance indicated that the volume of Shakespeare was considered so great a risk, that it required the joint aid of these printers; but the parties only united to secure the monopoly of all the plays.

It therefore results, that the player-editors pretended to warn the public that all the preceding editions were "maimed and deformed;" and the proprietors of these pretended surreptitious editions silently acquiesced in their own condemnation, for the future advantages they expected to derive from their share in the monopoly.

It is quite obvious that the first proprietors of the quarto plays could never have acquired such complete copies without either Shakespeare or his company having furnished them. Yet Shakespeare, if he had connived at these publications, could never have revised the press; another evidence of the utter recklessness of the poet of the fate of his dramas.

The player-editors supplied about twenty new dramas; and, by another adroit deception in their titlepage, they announced that all the dramas were NOW published "according to the original copies."

Alas! where were these "original copies"? The precious autographs could not have endured through many a season the thumbings of "the book-holder" or the prompter. The playhouse copies, carelessly written out in parts for the actors, interpolated with whole scenes, spurious with ribaldry, and extemporaneous nonsense at the caprice of some favorite actor, corrupt with false readings, obscure with distorted alterations, and often omissions of a line, or half a line, to connect or to complete the sense, verse lurking in prose, and metre without

feet, — such were the original sins of the copies despatched in haste to a rapid press; and the writings of Shakespeare come before the world in these hurried proofs from printers among whom a corrector of the press seems to have been unknown. It is in this prolific soil of weeds that many are still too curiously seeking for the genuine text of Shakespeare, perhaps too often irretrievable.* The recollections of these two players were

* Most of our old plays come before us in a corrupt and mangled state. They were often imperfectly caught by the scribe, or otherwise surreptitiously obtained; hurried through the press from some illegible manuscript by a careless printer, who would throw three distinct speeches into the mouth of one character, transpose the names of the *dramatis personæ*, and omit the change of scene; while others again with indiscriminate fidelity, from a stolen transcript of the prompter's book, preserved his private memorandums and directions in the stage-copy. Even in the first folio of Shakespeare, so absent from their work were the player-editors, that "tables and chairs" are introduced, to direct the property-man or the scene-shifters to be in readiness. Verse is printed as prose, to save the expenditure of those small blank spaces which divide those two regions of genius. The dramatists themselves, who probably conceived that they had consigned all their property in their vended plays, never read their own proof-sheets. The reader may form a clear conception of the injuries inflicted on these writers by the existing presentation-copy of Massinger's "Duke of Milan," in which may be seen how the poet, after its publication, indignantly corrected the multiplied and the strange errata. The printer gave this text: —

> "Observe and honor her as if the SEAL
> Of woman's goodness only dwelt in hers."

The poet corrected this to "the SOUL." The sagacity of an English Bentley could hardly have conjectured the happy emendation: only the poet himself could have supplied it.

Again the printer's text runs: —

> "From any lip whose HONOR writ not lord."

The poet corrected this also to "whose OWNER."

These errors of the press are far more important to the readers of Shakespeare than many suspect. "Who knows," exclaimed the acute Gifford, "whether much of the ingenious toil to explain nonsense in the variorum edition of Shakespeare is not absolutely wasted upon mere *errors of the press*?" Not long after this was said, an actual experiment of the kind was made by a skilful printer. This person, during the leisure of eleven years of a French captivity, had found his most constant companion in a Shake-

so inaccurate, that they at first totally omitted the "Troilus and Cressida," which is inserted without pagination; and, with little discrimination in the writings of Shakespeare, preserved the barbarous "Titus Andronicus," evidently one of Marlowe's gigantic pieces, and the old play of "the First Part of Henry the Sixth:" but it is by no means certain that not less than twenty other dramas had various degrees of claims to be included in the works of Shakespeare; such as the suspicious "Pericles." * But the incompetence of these player-editors, even in transcribing from the prompter's copies, was not their only fault. "Will" was but "their fellow;" time had not hallowed him into the national poet: and they themselves had formed no elevated conception of the art of Sophocles and Terence; for, in their dedication to two peers, they express their fear whether their noble patrons from "their greatness would *descend to the reading of* SUCH TRIFLES," — the immortal writings! These unhappy editors seem to

speare.[1] By his own experience of the blunders and the mischances of the typographer, to which we may add also a little sagacity, he recovered some of the lost text. His new readings were accompanied by an explanation of those mechanical accidents which had caused these particular errata. The practical printer mortified the haughty commentator by several felicitous and obvious emendations. The grave brotherhood of black-letter looked askance on such humble ingenuity, and turned against the simple printer. Unluckily for ZACHARY JACKSON, he had the temerity, in the flush of success, of abandoning his type-work, to err in "the dalliance of fancy" into an ambitious Commentary of "seven hundred passages," when seventy had exceeded his fair claim. The commentating printer, therefore, met with the fate of the immortalized cobbler who ventured to criticise beyond the right measure of his last.

* Collier's "Poetical Decameron," i. 52. STEEVENS thought "the Yorkshire Tragedy" to be Shakesperian; and the Rev. ALEXANDER DYCE, struck by the Shakespearian soliloquy of the wife, decides that "it contains passages worthy of his pen." — *Dyce's Mem. of Shakespeare*, xxxi.

[1] So numerous were the English prisoners in France during the persecuting war of Napoleon, and so general was the demand for a "Shakespeare," that more than one edition, I think, was printed by the French booksellers, which I have seen on their literary stalls.

reflect back to us the humiliated feelings of Shakespeare and the age on the histrionic art. In that early epoch of our literature, the sock and buskin had indeed been worn by a reckless race.

Charles the First was a lover of the English drama. The king delighted to explore into the manuscript plays which were laid before the master of the revels for his license. Milton has acquainted us that the writings of Shakespeare formed the favorite studies of the monarch.* In the "Iconoclastes," alluding to those writers who have shown the characteristic religious hypocrisy of tyrants, Milton observes, "I shall not instance an abstruse author wherein the king might be less conversant, but one whom we well know was the CLOSET COMPANION of these his solitudes, — William Shakespeare."

This has been considered as a designed reproach, and we are startled by such a style from the author of "Comus" and of "Samson Agonistes." The odious distinction of not referring the king to an abstruse author seems a palpable sneer at the course of the king's reading, who, however, was not deficient in learning; and, in making the king's "closet companion" Shakespeare, Milton too well knew that he was casting the deepest odium on the royal character; for to this poet's then masters, the Puritanical faction, there could be nothing less to be forgiven than a king, and a king in his imprisonments, mockingly here called "these his solitudes," than to be a play-reader! The slur, the gibe, and the covert satire, are, I fear, too obvious. I would gladly have absolved our great bard from this act of treason at least against the majesty of Shakespeare's genius.† Milton had more deeply

* That Shakespeare was the favorite poet of Charles the First is confirmed to the eyes of posterity; for, on the copy the king used, he has written his own name, and left other traces of his pen: the volume now bears also the autograph of George the Third. It is preserved, it is hoped, in the library of the sovereigns of England.

† Milton, however, has been misinterpreted by some modern critics, when, on this occasion, having quoted that passage in "Richard the Third" which

studied Shakespeare than any king whatever; but at this moment his literature was to be stretched on the torture of his politics.

In the history of the celebrity of Shakespeare, this day of royal favor sank amid the national tempest; and the theatre was abolished with the throne.

With the Restoration, the drama returned to the people. Half a century only had elapsed since our poet flourished; but in that half-century our style, with our manners, and modes of feeling, had suffered the vicissitudes of a revolution. If, in the reign of Charles the First, they perceived a change in the language from that of Elizabeth, that change was more apparent, when, in retrograding, it was reduced to the indigent nakedness of the Puritanic period; and then, bursting into an opposite direction, like —

"Stars shot madly from their spheres," —

was mottled by the modern Gallic in phrase and in criticism, corrupting our national taste, and thus removing us still further from the Shakespearian diction in idiom and in imagery. A great master of language, Dryden, confesses he found Shakespeare almost as difficult as old Chaucer.

On the restored theatre, "the renowned Jonson," thus distinguished by Shadwell, retained his supremacy in "the Fox," "the Silent Woman," and "the Alchemist;" and the airy and loose Fletcher was popular, being considered by this new generation as having drawn the characters of gentlemen more to their humor than his grave predecessors. One of the first

displays his hypocrisy, Milton adds, "*Other stuff of this sort* may be read throughout the whole tragedy, wherein the poet used not much license in departing from the truth of history." Pye, in his "Commentary on the Poetic of Aristotle," is indignant at the language of Milton. He takes the term "stuff" in its modern depreciating sense: but it had no such meaning with Milton; it merely signified *matter*. Pye exclaims, "Could Milton have imagined that *the stuff* of Mr. William Shakespeare would be preferred to 'Comus' and the 'Samson Agonistes'? " — 212.

managers was Davenant: to his partiality, for he was eager to acknowledge Shakespeare his father both in blood and in verse, we may ascribe the revival of that poet's plays. Dryden has told that it was Davenant who first taught him to appreciate our national bard; they were caught by the fancy of the poet: but the great ethical preceptor of mankind had never entered into their contemplation; and thus "Macbeth" shrank into an opera under the hand of Davenant; and the "Tempest," after having been seemingly burlesqued by duplicate characters of Miranda, Ferdinand, and Caliban, by Davenant and Dryden together, was turned into an opera by Shadwell, and exhibited as if it were a pantomime, depending now on popular favor for new dresses, new music, and new machinery. "Romeo and Juliet" was altered by the Hon. James Howard, Dryden's brother-in-law, to introduce a happy conclusion: however, it is but justice to the town to record, that they were so firmly divided in opinion on the catastrophe, that it was alternately played as tragedy and tragic-comic. We may fairly conclude by these profanations, that the true taste for our national bard had passed away.*

Evelyn is a literary man, whose judgment has its value; and assuredly he records the taste of the court-circle. In 1661, he saw "'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,' played; but now *the old plays begin to disgust this refined age*, since his majesty has been so long abroad." Pepys, his contemporary, was a

* I derive my knowledge from the "Roscius Anglicanus" of DOWNES, the prompter; it is a meagre chronicle, and the scribe is illiterate: but the edition by F. WALDRON, 1784, is an addition to our literary history. Though chiefly dramatic, it abounds with some curious secret history. Waldron, himself an humble actor, was, however, a sagacious literary antiquary; but his modesty, and failure of encouragement, impeded his proposed labors. Gifford found him intelligent when that critic was busied on Jonson; and I possess an evidence of his acute emendations.

By this chronicle of our drama, it appears, that, in a list of fifteen stock plays, there are seven of Beaumont and Fletcher, three of Jonson, and three of Shakespeare. In another list of twenty-one plays, there are *five* of Jonson, and but *one* of Shakespeare, and that "Titus Andronicus."

play-haunter; and how he relished "the Midsummer Night's Dream," with all its beautiful fancy, appears by his firm opinion, that "it was the most insipid, ridiculous play he had ever seen." "Macbeth," though "a deep tragedy, had a strange perfection in a *divertissement;*" that is, "Macbeth" was Davenant's opera, with music and dancing. But Pepys *read* "Othello," and we have his deliberate notion; "but, having lately read the 'Adventures of Five Hours,' 'Othello' seemed a mean thing"! It is clear from these, and there are other as remarkable instances, that their ideas of the drama had wholly changed; that Nature and Fancy had retired from the stage, to give precedence to what are called "Heroic Tragedy," and comedies of intrigue.

Shakespeare's plays, in a great measure, were banished the stage: but we may presume that Shakespeare still preserved some readers, though not critical ones; for, four years after the Restoration, the third edition of Shakespeare in 1664, with seven additional dramas, — one of which, "the Yorkshire Tragedy," had been printed with his name in his lifetime, — was given to the world.

Leaving the theatre, and its moody humors of the populace, let us turn to those who think in their closet. How did such critics arbitrate? We can have no judge more able than the learned author of "Hudibras:" — "The quickest apprehensions, and aptest geniuses to any thing they undertake, do not always prove *the greatest masters* in it; for there is more patience and phlegm required in those that attain to any degree of perfection, than is commonly found in the temper of *active and ready wits that soon tire, and will not hold out.*" Butler instances Virgil, who, wanting much of that natural easiness of wit that Ovid had, "did nevertheless, with hard labor and long study, arrive at a higher perfection than the other, with all his dexterity of wit, but less industry, could attain to. The same we may observe of JONSON and SHAKESPEARE: for he that *is able to think long, and judge well, will be*

sure to find out better things than another man can hit upon suddenly, though of more quick and ready parts; which is commonly but CHANCE; and the other, wit and judgment."*

After this long extract, it is quite evident, that with a predilection for Shakespeare, alive at times to his true touches of nature, BUTLER could not at that day take a comprehensive view of the faculties of the great bard. What we deem his intuitive faculty seemed but "chance," that could only "hit suddenly:" that prodigality of genius, the marvels which modern criticism has revealed to its initiated, was an advent; the day had not yet come! Butler perceived the electrical strokes of Shakespeare; but the mental shadowings, and the oneness, which rose together in the creation of a "Macbeth," a "Hamlet," a "Lear," was a philosophical result, which probably no one had yet dreamed of.

If the genius of SHAKESPEARE were neglected, it was also destined to be arraigned and condemned.

Critical learning was yet new in our literature: it had taken its birth in Italy, among a crowd of philosophers, rhetoricians, and philologists, busied in developing the true principles of every species of literary composition. The academy *Della Crusca* was a tribunal, and the "Poetic of Aristotle," commented on by the renowned Castelvetro, was a code, which was chiefly directed to the dramatic art. Our airy neighbors, whose national theatre at its beginning had much resembled our own in its freedom and originality, at the erection of the famous French Academy, evidently in imitation of the Cruscan, with the great cardinal at its head, surrendered to the Greeks and to Aristotle. Every thing now was to be as it had been; and every work, whatever might be its genius, was to be strictly modelled by certain arbitrary decisions; and all tragedies were to be written according to the humor of that ancient people, the Greeks, with their choruses, and regulated by

* Butler's "Genuine Remains," ii. 494.

the severe unities of time and place and action! Bossu set down his prescriptions to compound an epic; and Père Rapin, in his "Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poetry," dictated "Universal Rules" for all sorts of poetry. RYMER, the collector of our Fœdera, in his earlier days was an excellent scholar, and cultivated elegant literature. He translated this very work of Père Rapin, to which he prefixed an ingenious critical preface on comparative poetry. Enraptured by Grecian tragedy, and vivacious with French criticism, and moreover sanguine with an elevated conception of a certain forthcoming tragedy, which was to appear "a faultless piece" among our own monstrous dramas, Rymer grasped the new and formidable weapon of modern criticism. Armed at all points with a Grecian helmet and a Gallic lance, this literary Quixote sallied forth to attack all the giants or the windmills of the English theatre.

Now appeared "the Tragedies of the Last Age examined by the Practice of the Ancients. 1678." This explosion entirely fell on three of Fletcher's plays.* This critical bomb was learned and lively. The court, and consequently the popular, tastes were classical or Gallic: RYMER haunted St. James's, and soon became one of "their majesties' servants." He had formed the most elevated conception of the dramatic art, and that tragedy was a poem for kings; and he tells, that the poets who first brought tragedy to perfection were made viceroys.

"The poetry of the last age," the age of Elizabeth, he considered was "rude as our architecture;" and he detected the cause in our utter "neglect of the Poetic of Aristotle, on which all the great men in Italy had commented, before, on this side of the Alps, we knew of the existence of such a book."

This critic-poet — for, unluckily for Aristotle, Rymer resolved on being both — had a notion, that "though it be not

* "Rollo," "King and No King," and "the Maid's Tragedy."

necessary that all heroes should be kings, yet undoubtedly all crowned heads should be heroes:" this was a prerogative of the crown never to be invaded by any parliament of poets. This passive obedience in the critical art was perfume in "the royalty" of a dedication to Charles the Second, preparatory of the writer's own legitimate tragedy of "Edgar, or the English Monarch," in rhymed verse; and the first inroad of his critical demolition was to expose "the barbarisms" of Milton's blank! Rymer was as intrepid as he was enterprising. He composed his tragedy on the principles which he advocated; and the result was precisely what happened to the Abbé d'Aubignac, who wrote on the same system. Undoubtedly, he congratulated himself on the perfection of the clock-work machinery of his legitimate drama, where he had inviolably preserved the unities; for the action begins about one o'clock at noon, and the catastrophe closes at ten at night! He would have been right by "Shrewsbury clock." To the audience, however, the "long hour" might have seemed much longer than the delightful "Winter's Tale" of Shakespeare, which includes the events of twenty years!

The formidable critique, not the tragedy, made a great sensation: many were on the side of the stout Aristotelian, though some might deem that little mercy had tempered his justice. Dryden prepared an answer, for we have its heads: but he seems to have been awed by the critic's learning, for he never proceeded; and, at a later day, Rymer was a critic, quite after Pope's own heart, on our ancient drama.* Some years after, the critique was honored by a second edition; and, in the following year, this *combat à l'outrance* was again waged, with no diminished intrepidity, in "A Short View of Tragedy,

* We may listen to Pope. — S. "Rymer is a learned and strict critic"! — P. "Ay, that's exactly his character. He is generally right, though rather too severe in his opinion of the particular plays he speaks of; and is, on the whole, one of the best critics we ever had." — SPENCE'S *Anecdotes*, 172.

with some reflections on SHAKESPEARE, and other PRACTITIONERS for the Stage," 1693. This, notwithstanding the offensive theme, is replete with curious literature, and some original researches in Provençal poetry.

"Rymer is the worst critic that ever lived." Such is the warm decision of an eloquent modern critic.* But in taste, as well as in more serious affairs, every age is governed by opinions. A mechanical critic then seemed mathematically irrefutable. Judging an English drama by the practice of the ancients, his triumph was easy. This scholastic doctrine, however, proved too subtle for the English people; and even the learned themselves in time looked up to nature. The philosophy of criticism, that is, of the human mind, was then imperfectly comprehended. A critic will be no longer safe who has nothing by heart but canons of criticism. The curious "Tracts" of RYMER are a memorable evidence how a learned critic, deprived of native susceptibility, may distort the noblest productions by coarse jocularity, and that malice of criticism,—ridicule! He calls "Othello" "the tragedy of the pocket-handkerchief." That beautiful incident Shakespeare had found in Cynthio's novel, and probably intuitively felt how casualties, small as this one, in human affairs, may become associated with our highest passions. Rymer only exposed the poverty of his imagination, when, with a morsel of Quintilian, he would demonstrate this incident to be "too small a matter to move us in tragedy; much like Fortunatus's purse and the invisible cloak, long ago worn threadbare, and stowed up in the wardrobe of obsolete romance." With Othello's tragic tale before him, the critic worms himself into "the burlesque or comic parts;" and these he insidiously lauds, to insinuate that "Othello" is but "a bloody farce." The blending of the comic and the serious in the same character, as in that of Iago, as often we find it in the many-colored scenes of

* "Edinburgh Review," Sept. 1831.

human life, was an artful mixture too potent and poisonous in the cup of mechanical criticism. There is a strange malignant drollery, a bitter pleasantry, in the villanous Iago, as in the scene where he alarms Brabantio for the fate of his daughter, which to "the heroic" dramatist, who could only move on stilts, was mistaken for "farce," and not comprehended in his narrow views of human nature.

RYMER, however, was a ripe scholar, and the founder, in our literature, of what has been considered as the French or the classical school of criticism; and he has won the unlucky distinction of being designated as "Shakespeare's critic"! In Dryden's prologue to "Love Triumphant," there is an allusion which Sir Walter Scott could not assign to any individual, though he acutely suspected it had a reference to some person: Sir Walter, at that moment, forgot Rymer and his "heroic tragedy." The lines are now very significant:—

> "To SHAKESPEARE'S CRITIC he bequeathes the curse,—
> *To find his faults*, and yet HIMSELF MAKE WORSE." *

The uncertain criticisms of Dryden on Shakespeare were often dictated by the impulse of the moment, and stand in strange opposition to each other. At one happy time, indeed, he exclaimed, "I admire Jonson; but I love Shakespeare:" but he had not dived into the spirit of the poet, else we should not have had the strong censure of a "lethargy of thought for whole scenes together;" we should not have heard of "the bombast speeches of 'Macbeth;'" nor that "the historical plays, 'the Winter's Tale' and 'Measure for Measure,' are

* The fate of Rymer's tragedy has been illustrated by the inimitable humor of Addison, in No. 592 of "the Spectator." Describing different theatrical properties, he says, "They are provided with above a dozen showers of snow, which, as I am informed, are the plays of many unsuccessful poets, artificially cut and shredded for that use. Mr. Rymer's 'Edgar' is to fall in snow at the next acting of 'King Lear,' in order to heighten, or rather to alleviate, the distress of that unfortunate prince, and to serve by way of decoration to a piece which that great critic has written against."

so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment."

Dryden, however great as a poet, was deficient in passion, whose natural touches he acknowledged he had found in Otway. In his earliest pieces, while enamoured of the false taste of his heroic tragedies, it is certain he had formed little relish for nature and Shakespeare, which, at a later period of life, he seems to have been more open to.

In 1681, the poet laureate, Nahum Tate, was so little acquainted with Shakespeare, that, "Lear" being brought to his notice, he found it a treasure, a heap of jewels unstrung and unpolished; and, having had "the good fortune to light upon an expedient to rectify it," he brought it on the stage.

Shakespeare was now out of fashion, and a man of fashion aimed a last and mortal blow. The noble author of the "Characteristics" anathematized "the Gothic model of poetry." He told the nation that "the British Muses were in their infant state, without any thing of shapeliness or person, lisping in their cradles, with stammering tongues, which nothing but their youth and rawness can excuse." Our dramatic SHAKESPEARE and our epic MILTON are among these venerable bards, "*rude as they were according to their time and age.*" The classical pedant had, however, the sagacity to perceive that they have provided us with "the richest ore." Nature and Shakespeare lifted not their veil to the cold artificial soliloquist, whose faint delicacy bred its own sickliness, and who, in the march and glitter of his external pomp, only betrayed the internal failure of his vigor.

The fourth and last folio edition of Shakespeare appeared in 1685. The poet again was locked up in a huge folio for the following twenty-five years; when, in 1709, he was freed by Rowe, who now gave him to the world at large in a more current form, which would meet the eye of the many.*

* On the play-bills of that day I find the modern dramas of "Cato," "the Conscious Lovers," and Cibber's and Farquhar's plays are simply an-

The appearance of Rowe's edition at least placed the volumes in the hands of Steele and Addison, and possibly it formed their first studies of this poet. Whoever will take the pains to examine their popular papers may discover the fruits of their first thoughts. Steele at first seems to have derived his knowledge of Shakespeare from the plays as they were represented: he quotes "Macbeth" by memory very faultily, in the famous exclamation of Macduff; and seems quite unconscious of the character of Lady Macbeth, and indeed notices that all the female characters of Shakespeare make "so small a figure."* As we proceed, we discover him more deeply read and more familiar with the poet's language. It was not to be hoped, from Addison's colder fancy and classical severity, that the Elizabethan poet could transport this critic by his inexhaustible imagery, and a diction which paints the passions as well as reveals them. The prosaic genius of Addison, which had produced a frigid "Cato," could hardly fathom the depth of the mightier soul. He pronounced Shakespeare "very faulty in hard metaphors and forced expressions," and

nounced; while the elder dramatists have accompanying epithets, which show the degree of their celebrity, according at least to the director of the bills, and perhaps indicate the necessity he was under to remind the public, who were not familiar with the titles of these old plays. Thus appear "'the Silent Woman,' a comedy by the *famous* Ben Jonson;" "'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,' written by the *immortal* Shakespeare;" "'the Soldier's Fortune,' written by the late *ingenious* Mr. Otway." Though Shakespeare bears away the prize among these epithetical allotments, I suspect that his *immortality* — here positively assigned to him — was owing to the honor of the recent edition by Rowe.

In 1741, the theatre seems to have recommended the dramas of Shakespeare for the variety of their *historical subjects*. On one of these bills, "Richard the Third" is described as "containing the distresses of King Henry the Sixth; the murder of young King Edward the Fifth and his brother in the Tower; the landing of the Earl of Richmond; and the death of King Richard in the memorable battle of Bosworth, being the last that was fought between the Houses of York and Lancaster; with many other true historical passages."

* "Tatler," 42.

he joins Shakespeare and Nat Lee as instances of the false sublime.* Pope's idea was similar, in his conversation, not in his preface; and later so was Thomas Warton's.†

In 1718, Bysshe, in compiling his "Art of Poetry," which consists of mere extracts, passed by "Spenser and the poets of his age, because their language has become so obsolete that most readers of our age have no ear for them, and therefore SHAKESPEARE is so rarely cited in this collection."

Rowe silently corrected his unostentatious edition: when fifteen years had elapsed, Tonson called on a greater poet to succeed to the editorial throne. The classical taste of Pope was disturbed and rarely sympathized with "the choice of the subjects, the wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions:" in tenderness to Shakespeare, these he held to be "not so much defects, but superfetations," which are to be ascribed to the times, to interpolation, to the copyists; and, contemning "the dull duty" of editorship, he initiated himself into the novel office of expurgator; striking out or inserting at pleasure, — not only pruning, but grafting. Schlegel exclaims in agony, that Pope would have given us a mutilated Shakespeare! but Pope, to satisfy us that he was not insensible to the fine passages of Shakespeare, distinguished by inverted commas all those which he approved! — so that Pope thus furnished for the first time what have been called "the *beauties* of Shakespeare"! But, amid such a disfigured text, the *faults* of Shakespeare must have been too apparent! Pope but partially relished, and often ill understood, his Shakespeare; yet, in the liveliest of prefaces, he offers the most vivid delineation of our great bard's *general characteristics*. The *genius of Shakespeare* was at once comprehended by his brother poet; but *the text* he was continually tampering with ended in a fatal testimony, that POPE had no congenial taste for the style, the manner, and the whole

* "Spectator," 39, 285. † V. iv. 186.

native drama, of England.* POPE laid himself open to the investigating eye of THEOBALD.

The attention of THEOBALD had been drawn to our old plays, by THOMAS COXETER, an enthusiast of our ancient dramatists. This Coxeter was the original projector of their revival; but, having communicated his plan, he witnessed the incompetent DODSLEY appropriate this fond hope of his dreamy life, and he has left us his indignant groans.†

After an interval of seven years, Theobald gave his edition. His attempts were limited to the emendation of corrupt passages, and the explanation of obscure ones: the more elevated disquisitions to develop the genius of his author, by principles of criticism applied to his beauties or his defects, he assigned to "a masterly pen." This, at least, was not arrogant. The man who is sensible of his own weakness is safe by not tasking it to the proof. His annotations are amus-

* Pope said that "it was mighty simple in Rowe to write a play now, professedly in Shakespeare's style; that is, the style of a bad age"! He relished as little Milton's "high style," as he called it. "The high style would not have been borne even in Milton, had not his subject turned so much on such strange out-of-the-world things as it does." Lord Shaftesbury would furnish a code of criticism in the days of Pope, when the "Gothic model" was proscribed by such high authorities. But Pope expressed unqualified approbation for the stately but classical "Ferrex and Porrex," and occasioned Spence to reprint it, — a tragedy in the unimpassioned style and short breathings of the asthmatic Seneca.

† COXETER, after a search of thirty years, faithfully collating the best of our old plays, tells us he happened to communicate his scheme to one who now invades it; but, for what mistakes and confusion may be expected from the medley now advertising in ten volumes, he appeals to the "Gorboduc" which Spence had published by the desire of Pope: both these wits, and the future editor of "Old Plays," Dodsley, had used the spurious edition! Coxeter's judgment was prophetic in the present instance. "Dodsley's Collection" turned out to be a chance "medley:" unskilled in the language and the literature and the choice of his dramatists, he, as he tells us, "by the assistance of a little common sense, set a great number of these passages right;" that is, the dramatist of the dull "Cleone" brought down the ancient genius to his own; and, if he became intelligible, at least he was spurious. If, after all, some parts were left unintelligible, the reader must consider how many such remain in Shakespeare.

ing from the self-complacency of the writer, who at times seems to have been struck by his own felicitous results; and in truth he was often successful, more than has been honestly avowed by those who have poached on his manor. Theobald exulted over Pope; but he read his triumph in "the Dunciad."

The Popeians now sunk the sole merit of the laborious sagacity of "the restorer," as Mr. Pope affectionately called him, to that of "a word-catcher." But "piddling Theobald," branded in the forehead by the immortal "Dunciad," was the first who popularized the neglected writings of Shakespeare.* His editions dispersed thirteen thousand copies; while nearly a third of Pope's original subscription edition, of seven hundred and fifty copies, were left unvendible.†

It is an evidence of the spread of Shakespeare's celebrity, that a fashionable circle had formed themselves into a society under the title of "the Shakespeare Club." Every week they bespoke some favorite play; but, unexpectedly, the *acted plays* of Shakespeare seemed to lose greatly of their secret magic: this failure was charged upon the unhappy performers, whose skill appeared all unequal to raise the emotions which the bard had inspired in the closet. Certain it is, that, for the full comprehension of the genius of this great poet, we must learn

* A third edition lies before me, 1757. The preface of the first edition of 1733 was much curtailed in the second of 1740, as well as the notes, particularly those which Theobald describes as "rather verbose and declamatory, and so notes merely of ostentation." The candor is admirable. The third edition seems a mere reprint of the second. The first edition is also curious for its plates, preserving the *costume*, or dress, of the characters at the time.

† This was one of those literary secrets which are only divulged on that final day of judgment which happens to authors, when, on the decease of their publishers, those literary cemeteries, their warerooms, open for the sale of what are called "their effects;" but which, in this instance of literary property, may be deemed "the ineffectual effects." At the sale of "the effects" of Tonson, the great bibliopolist, in 1767, one hundred and forty copies of Pope's "Shakespeare," in six volumes quarto, for which the original subscribers paid six guineas, were disposed of at sixteen shillings only per set. —*Gent. Mag.*, lvii. 76.

to think, to reflect, to combine; for what has passed is a part of what is going on; and this is a labor more adapted for the repose of the closet than the business of the theatre. Much is written which must remain in the mind, and cannot come within the province of acting. The dramas of Shakespeare, as they have descended to us, modern taste also has always required to be altered and adapted: they are less calculated for performance on the stage than those of almost any other dramatist who has become classical in the theatre. Unquestionably, the great poet had retained much of the barbarism of the old plays which he rewrote without remodelling; bustle which hurries on our attention without stimulating our feelings; some flagrant indecorums and some absolute nonsense to the taste of "the groundlings of the Globe." In the revery of the poet's pages, the eye glides silently over the offending passages which cannot detain it. It was these prominent defects which provoked so many modern alterations; and no doubt Tate and Cibber, and all that race, exulted like Shadwell, who, in his dedication to his alteration of "Timon of Athens," exclaims, "I can truly say, I have made it into a play." When Sir James Mackintosh observed, that "Massinger's taste, as Shakespeare's genius, is displayed with such prodigal magnificence in the *parts*, but never employed in the construction of the whole," he was perhaps not aware of the real cause; which was that of our great poet following the construction of old plays, without altering their ordonnance. It is true, also, that the characters of Shakespeare require something of his own genius in their personifiers to sustain the perfect illusion: great actors seem always to have felt the deep emotions they raised; they studied, they meditated, till at length they personified the ideal character they represented. We are told this of Burbage and Betterton, and we know it of Garrick and Mrs. Siddons.

A novel fate was now to befall Shakespeare. Theobald had made his volumes useful for all hands: a man of rank, who

had been the speaker of the House of Commons, set the first example of literary magnificence. Sir THOMAS HANMER had cradled his fancy in the idealism of publication: his edition was to be not only "the fairest impression, beautified with the ornaments of sculpture," but it was not to be *sold* by booksellers! The Shakespeare of Sir Thomas Hanmer seemed to be a sacred thing, like the show-bread of ancient Israel, to be touched by no profane hand, nor eaten but by an exclusive class. He made a gratuitous donation of his "sculptured" edition to his Alma Mater, to issue from the university-press, at a very moderate subscription-price. The embroidered mantle, however, but ill concealed the trifler. Sir Thomas had vigorously attacked the grammatical errors of the poet, which, in fact, was often a violation of the text; for Shakespeare wrote ungrammatically: the other editorial effort was a metrical amusement, gently lopping a redundant or straightening a limping line. The only harm of his edition was his modesty in adopting all the innovations of his predecessors; for his own were quite innocent. On the whole, Sir Thomas appears to have edited his Shakespeare, wearing all the while his "white kid gloves," which the Mad Tom Hervey, who ran away with his lady, by information which he ought not to have divulged, assured the world that the baronet always slept in.

Under the veil of giving "dear Mr. Pope's" edition, which no one craved, the great author of "the Divine Legation" now edited Shakespeare. It must have occurred to the readers of this edition, that hitherto no one had entered into any right conception of a great portion of the poet's writings. Many passages with which our memory is familiar were wrested into the most whimsical readings; plain matters were for ever obscured by perverse but ingenious interpretations; not only the words but the thoughts of the author were changed; here a line was to be wholly rejected, and there an interpolation was to clear an imperfect sense: but the most

prominent feature of the commentary was that learned fancy which struck out allusions to the most recondite circumstances of learned antiquity.*

In this great commentator on Shakespeare, there was always a contest between his learning and his fancy; the one was copious, and the other was exuberant: neither could yield to the other; and the reader was sure to be led astray by both. His fervid curiosity was absolutely creative; all things crowded to bear on his point: in the precipitancy of his pen, his taste or his judgment was not of that degree which could save him even from inglorious absurdities. But the ingenious follies of his literature were such that they have often been preserved, for the sake of all that learning which it required for their refutation.

When all was over, and the battle was fought and lost, the friends of the great man acknowledged that the editor's design had never been to explain Shakespeare! and that he was even conscious that he had frequently imputed to the poet meanings which had never entered the mind of the bard! Our critic's grand object was to display his own learning in these amusements of his leisure. Warburton wrote for Warburton, and not for Shakespeare; and the literary confession almost rivals those of Lauder or Psalmanazar.

There is one more remarkable object in the Shakespeare of Warburton. He not only preserved that strange device of Pope, to distinguish the most beautiful passages by *inverted commas*, but carried on that ridiculous process on his own separate account by marking his favorites by *double commas*. It is evident that these great editors judged Shakespeare by these fragmentary and unconnected passages, which could not indicate the harmonious and gradual rise of the thoughts, nor the fine transitions of emotions, and less the comprehensive genius, of the inventor. They were scattering the living

* See "Quarrels of Authors."

members which must be viewed whole with all their movements, and at last must be sought for by the reader in his own mind. The truest mode of discovering the beauties of an author is first to be conversant with the beautiful; otherwise it is possible that the beauties may escape the readers, even should they be marked by a Pope or a Warburton.

The acknowledged failure of the preceding editions invited to a fresh enterprise; and it was the edition of Johnson, in 1765, which conferred on Shakespeare the stability of a classic, by the vigor and discrimination of his criticism, and the solemnity of his judicial decisions.

When Johnson had issued his proposals twenty years before for an edition of Shakespeare, he pointed to a great novelty for the elucidation of the poet. His intuitive sagacity had discerned that a poet so racy and native required a familiarity both with the idiom and the manners of his age. He was sensible that a complete explanation of an author, not systematic and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and slight hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. He enumerates, however, the desiderata for this purpose; among which we find that of reading the books which Shakespeare read, and to compare his works with those of writers who lived at the same time, or immediately preceded, or immediately followed him. This project, happily conceived, inferred comprehensive knowledge in the proposer; but it was only a revery,—a dim Pisgah view which the sagacity of the great critic had taken of that future Canaan, which he himself never entered. With this sort of knowledge, and these forgotten writers, which the future commentators of Shakespeare revelled in, Johnson remained wholly unacquainted.

But what proved more fatal to the editorial ability of JOHNSON than this imperfect knowledge of the literature and the manners of the age of Shakespeare, was that the commentator rarely sympathized with the poet; for his hard-witted and

unpliant faculties, busied with the more palpable forms of human nature, when thrown amid the supernatural and the ideal, seemed suddenly deserted of their powers: the magic knot was tied which cast our Hercules into helpless impotence; and, in the circle of imaginative creation, we discover the baffled sage resisting the spell by apologizing for Shakespeare's introduction of his mighty preternatural beings! a certain evidence that the critic had never existed for a moment under their influence. "Witches, fairies, and ghosts would not now be tolerated by an audience:" such was the grave and fallacious assumption of the unimaginative critic, which seems something worse than Voltaire's raillery: for, though that wit ridiculed the ghost in "Hamlet," he afterwards had the poetic agility to transfer its solemnity to his own "Semiramis;" though, like all rapid inlayers, the *appliqué* did not fit to his work.*

We may even suspect the degree of our great critic's susceptibility of the infinitely varied emotions flowing in the inexhaustible vein of the poet of nature. In those judicial summaries at the close of each drama, his cold approbation, his perplexing balancings, his hazarded doubts, or his positive censures, all alike betray the uncertainty and the difficulties of a critical mind, which misapplied its energies to themes adverse to its habits.

Johnson's preface to his Shakespeare was long held as a masterpiece; and several splendid passages, after more than

* Laharpe, in a paroxysm of criticism, had both to defend and to censure his great master, Voltaire, on the subject of the Marvellous in Tragedy; and, strange to observe, in the coldness of the Aristotelian-Gallic Poetic, our "monster-poet" carries away the palm. The critic acknowledges, that, though he is loath to compare "Semiramis" to that "monster of a tragedy," "Hamlet," the Ghost there acts as a ghost should do, — showing himself but to one person, and revealing a secret unknown to all but himself; while the Ghost of Ninus appears in a full assembly, only to tell the hero to listen to somebody else who knows the secret as well as the ghost. — *Cours de Littérature.*

half a century, remain to remind us of his nervous intellect. If we now read that preface with a different understanding than that of most of its contemporaries, it is because Johnson himself has revealed his poetical confessions in certain "Lives of the Poets." We now look on that famed preface much more as a labor of pomp than a labor of love. Far from me be any irreverence to our master-genius of the past century, whose volumes were read by all readers, and imitated by all writers: my first devotion to literature was caught from his pages, and the fire still burns on that altar. But the literary character of JOHNSON, with his enduring works, is no longer a subject of inquiry, but of history; of truths established, and not of opinions which are mutable.

Can we imagine that Johnson himself experienced a degree of conviction, some perplexing consciousness, that his spirit was not endowed with the sensibility of Longinus? A profound thinker, acutely argumentative and analytical, though clothed in the purple of his cumbrous diction and the cadences of his concatenated periods, when he touched on themes of pure imagination, and passions not merely declamatory, had nothing left to him but the solitary test of his judgment to decide on what lies out of the scope of daily life. He interpreted the pathetic and the sublime, till they ceased to be either by the force of his reasoning and the weakness of his conceptions; he cross-examined shadowy fancies, till they vanished under the eye of the judge. He had no wing to ascend into "the heaven of invention."

In JOHNSON'S SHAKESPEARE, therefore, we may trace that deficient sympathy which subsequently betrayed itself in his revolting decisions on Collins, on Gray, on Milton, and on others. It was his hard fate to be called on to deliver his solemn decisions on two of our greatest poets: from Spenser he had fortunately escaped, having wholly forgotten the Muse of Mulla; while his piety and his taste had remembered Blackmore, in the collection of English poets. It is curious to

detect the mode by which our great critic extricated himself from the difficulties of his judicial function on Shakespeare and on Milton, by his prudential sagacity, and his passive obedience to established authorities. Johnson's preface to Shakespeare was grafted on Pope's; as afterwards, when he came to Milton, he followed the track of Addison. But Johnson was too honest to disguise the reality of his own conviction. It was legitimate to adopt theirs; but it was independent to preserve his own: in this dissonance he has left a lesson and a warning for some who are eminent, and who travel in the high-road of criticism.

It is thus that we find in this famous preface to Shakespeare that he is hailed as the poet of nature, and is placed by the side of Homer; and of this, Pope had instructed the critic; but, in the sudden change, the noble qualities of the bard are minutely reversed: the antithesis was too often in the critic's own taste, and the characteristic excellence ascribed to Shakespeare seems hardly compatible with the number and the grossness of his faults. Every work of note bears the impression of its times; and we learn from the faithful chronicler of Johnson the real occasion which gave rise to this remarkable preface. "A blind and indiscriminate admiration of Shakespeare had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners; and this preface was considered as a grave, well-considered, and impartial opinion of the judge." Such was the defence of the logical critic, who so diligently enumerated the defects of his author, that Voltaire, who could never understand the language nor comprehend the genius of Shakespeare, might sometimes have referred to Johnson to confirm his own depreciating notions.

The extensive plan for the illustration of the poet, imperfectly projected by Johnson, was finally executed through a series of editions, which gave rise to a new class of literary antiquaries.

Shortly after the first edition of Johnson, Dr. FARMER led the way to the disclosure of a new lore in our old books.

Farmer had silently pursued an untired chase in this "black" forest, for he had a keen *gusto* for the native venison; and, alluding to his Shakespearian pursuits, exclaimed in the inspiring language of his poet, —

> "Age cannot wither them, nor custom stale
> Their infinite variety."

His vivacity relieved the drowsiness of mere antiquarianism. This novel pursuit once opened, an eager and motley pack was hallooed up; and Shakespeare, like Actæon, was torn to pieces by a whole kennel of his own hounds, as they were typified with equal humor and severity. But to be severe, and never to be just, is the penury of the most sordid criticism; and among these —

> "Spirits black, white, and gray," —

are some of the most illustrious in English literature.

The original edition of Johnson consisted only of eight volumes: had not the contriving wisdom of the printers impressed the last into twenty and one huge tomes, they might easily have been expanded into forty.

When we survey the massive *variorum* edition of Shakespeare, we are struck by the circumstance, that nothing similar has happened to any other national author. It was not to be expected, that, after the invention of the art of printing, an author could arise, whose works should be disfigured by treacherous transcribers, corrupted by interpolations, and still more by a race of men whose art was unknown to the ancients, subjecting his text to the mercy of contending commentators and conjectural critics. But a singular combination of untoward circumstances, attached to this poet and his works, produced this remarkable result. The scholiasts among the ancient classics had rejoiced in some rare emendation of the text, or the rhetorical commentator had flourished in the luxuriance of the latent beauties of some favorite author. But a far wider and deeper source of inquiry was now to be at-

tempted, historical or explanatory, — comments to clear up obscure allusions; to indicate unknown prototypes; to trace the vicissitudes of words as well as things; to picture forth the customs and the manners which had faded into desuetude, and to re-open for us the records of our social and domestic life; thus at once to throw us back into that age, and to familiarize us with that language, of Shakespeare which had vanished. Shakespeare, it may be said, suddenly became the favorite object of literary inquiry. Every literary man in the nation conned over and illumined "the infinite variety" of the bard; and assuredly they enriched our vernacular literature with a collection of historical, philological, and miscellaneous information unparalleled among any other literary people. In 1785, ISAAC REED, in one of his prefaces, informs us that "the works of Shakespeare, during the last twenty years, have been the object of public attention."

All this novel knowledge was, however, not purchased at a slight cost. It was not only to be snatched up by accidental discovery, but it was more severely tasked by what Steevens called "a course of black-letter"! — dusty volumes, and fugitive tracts, and the wide range of antiquarian research. The sources whence they drew their waters were muddy; and STEEVENS, who affected more gayety in his chains than his brothers in the Shakespearian galley, with bitter derision reproached his great coadjutor MALONE, whom he looked on with the evil eye of rivalry for drawing his knowledge from "books too mean to be formally quoted."

The commentators have encumbered the poet, who often has been but a secondary object of their lucubrations; for they not only write notes on Shakespeare, but notes, and bitter ones too, on one another. This commentary has been turned into a gymnasium for the public sports of friendly and of unfriendly wrestlers; where some have been so earnest, that it is evident, that, in measuring a cast, they congratulated themselves in

the language of Orlando: "If ever he goes alone again, I'll never wrestle for prize more."

THOMAS WARTON once covered with his shield some of the minor brotherhood: "If Shakespeare is worth reading, he is worth explaining; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose merit the thanks of genius and candor, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance." But this serves not as an apology for abusing the privilege of a commentator; elucidating the poet into obscurity by information equally contradictory and curious; racking us by fantastic readings which no one imagined before or since; and laying us open to the mercy of some who never ventured to sharpen their pens but on our irresistible Shakespeare. What has been the result of the petty conflicts between the arch maliciousness of Steevens and the fervent plodding of Malone, which raised up two parties among the Shakesperian commentators, till they became so personal, that a Steevenite and a Malonist looked on each other suspiciously, and sometimes would drop the ordinary civilities of life? At length, strange to tell, after Steevens had labored with zeal equal to the whole confraternity, it became a question with him, in what manner the poet COULD be read? Are we to con over each note appended to each word or passage? — but this would be perpetually to turn aside the flow of our imagination; or are we to read a large portion of the text uninterruptedly, and then return to the notes? — but this would be breaking the unity of the poet into fragments; or for a final decision, and the avowal must have mortified the ingenuous illustrator, according to a third class of readers, were these illustrations to be altogether rejected? Must the poet or the commentator be at continual variance? or shall we endure to see "Alcides beaten by his page"?

Might I be allowed to offer an award on a matter so involved and delicate as this union between the genius of Shakespeare and the genius of his commentators, I would concede

the divorce, from the incompatibility of temper between the parties; but I would insist on a separate maintenance, to preserve the great respectability attached to the party most complained of. The true reader of Shakespeare may then accommodate himself with two editions,—the one for his hand, having nothing but what the poet has written; the other for the shelf, having all the commentators have conjectured, confuted, and confounded.*

The celebrity of Shakespeare is no longer bounded by his nationality. Even France responds, though the voice of Parisian critics is muffled, confused, and ambiguous: they have not yet solved the great problem, why Shakespeare is an omnipotent dramatist.† The school of Corneille and Racine are

* Much, if not all, that is valuable in this great body of varied information, has been alphabetically arranged in "A Glossary, or Collection of Words, Phrases, Names, and Allusions to Customs, Proverbs, &c., which have required illustration in the *works of English Authors*, particularly *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*," by Archdeacon Nares, 4to, 1822; a compilation as amusing as it is useful, and which I suspect has not been justly appreciated. It is a substitute for all these commentators; and with this volume, at an easy rate, we are made free of the whole Shakesperian corporation.

† Monsieur VILLEMAIN, who possesses a perfect knowledge of our English writers on historical subjects, and many years since composed a Life of Cromwell, has drawn up an elaborate article on SHAKESPEARE in the "Biographie Universelle." The perplexities of his taste, and the contradictory results of his critical decisions, are amusing; but it must have been a serious labor for a person of his strict candor. Our critic remains astonished at Johnson's preference of Shakespeare's comic to his tragic genius; which never can be, he adds, the opinion of foreigners. Monsieur Villemain is perfectly right; for no foreigner can comprehend the humor, not always delicate, but strong, which often depends on the phrase, as well as on the character: but he errs when he can only discover in the comedy of Shakespeare merely a drama of intrigue, and not a picture of manners. Our critic has formed no conception of the poet's ideal standard and universal nature; insomuch that, to this day, we continue to apply among ourselves those exquisite personal strokes of the comic characters of Shakespeare. Our critic, who cannot perceive that which perhaps only a native can really taste, is indignant at the enthusiastic critic who has decided that MOLIERE only gave "a prosaic copy of human nature, and is merely a faithful or a servile imitator." I suppose this critic is Schlegel, a prejudiced critic on

perplexed, like Quin, who could not be brought to acknowledge the creative acting of Garrick; observing, that, "if that young man were right, all which they had hitherto done was wrong."

Voltaire, in early life, to compose the "Henriade," to escape from the Bastile, or to conceal his espionage, — for he appears to have been a secret *employé* of the French ministry, — resided a considerable time in England. He acquired an unusual knowledge of our language, and published an essay on the epic poets in English.* He discovered a new world among our writers, and was the first who introduced the literature of England into France. Voltaire expounded to his nation the philosophy of Newton; but unhappily he criticised and translated Shakespeare, whose idiomatic phrases and metaphorical style did not admit of the demonstrations of the Newtonian system. To the author of the "Henriade," who had ever before his eyes the two great masters whom he was one day to rival, the anti-classical and "Gothic" genius of a poet of the Elizabethan period, scorning the unities, following events without the contrivance of an intrigue artfully developed, mingling farce with tragedy, buffoons with monarchs, and preternatural beings stalking amid the palpable

system. I beg leave to add, that it is not necessary to decry the French Shakespeare to elevate our own. Molière is as truly an original genius as any dramatist of any age.

* This rare tract, which I once read in a private library which had been collected in the days of Pope, was apparently Voltaire's entire composition; for the Gallicisms bear the impression of a foreigner's pen, and of one determined to prove the authenticity of its source. "Voltaire, like the French in general," said Dr. Young, "showed the greatest complaisance outwardly, and had the greatest contempt for us inwardly." He consulted Dr. Young about his Essay in English, and begged him to correct any gross faults. The doctor set himself very honestly to work; marked the passages most liable to censure; and, when he went to explain himself about them, Voltaire could not avoid bursting out and laughing in his face! — *Spence.*

Had Voltaire accepted the doctor's verbal corrections, or the opinions suggested by him, something else than the "laughing in the face" had been recollected.

realities of life, — such irregular dramas seemed to the Aristotelian but *des farces monstrueuses*, as we see they appeared to Rymer and Shaftesbury; but Voltaire was too sagacious to be wholly insensible that "these monstrous farces, which they call tragedies, had scenes grand and terrific." Voltaire, then meditating on his future dramas, in passing over the surface of the soil, discovered that a mine lay beneath, —

> "Some ore
> Among a mineral of metals base;"

and the embedded treasure was worked with more diligence than with gratitude to the owner. If Voltaire ridiculed what he had found, it was partly with the desire of its concealment, but not wholly; for it was impossible for any foreigner to interpret sweet words and idiomatic phrases not to be found in dictionaries, or to make way through the bewilderment of the perpetual metaphorical diction of the daring fancy of the great poet: but the deformities of the bard would be too intelligible, — all those parts which Pope would have struck out as "superfetations." A bald version, or a malicious turn, would amuse the world by those amazing absurdities, which the wit, too famous for his ridicule, rejoiced to commit; and Europe yet knew nothing of Shakespeare, and lay under the sway of this autocrat of literature.*

* Two specimens of the criticism of Voltaire may explain his involuntary and his voluntary blunders: —

In "Hamlet," when one sentinel inquires of the other, "Have you had quiet guard?" he is answered, "Not a mouse stirring!" which Voltaire translates literally, "Pas un souris qui trotte"! How different is the same circumstance described by Racine! — "Tout dort, et l'armée, et les vents, et Neptune"! — a verse Kaimes had condemned as mere bombast! To every people, who had not associated with the general night-stillness of a castle the movement of a mouse, this description would appear ludicrously puerile; while with us the familiar idiom is most happily appropriate to the speaker: but this natural language no foreigner can acquire by study or reflection; we imbibe our idioms as we did the milk of the nurse's breast.

In "Julius Cæsar," when Voltaire translates Cæsar's reply to Metellus, who would fall at his feet to supplicate for the repeal of his brother's banish-

Mrs. MONTAGUE was the Minerva, for so she was complimented on this occasion, whose celestial spear was to transfix the audacious Gaul. Her "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare, compared with the Greek and French dramatic poets," served for a popular answer to Voltaire. This accomplished lady, who had raised a literary coterie about her, which attracted such fashionable notice that its title has survived its institution, found in "the Blue-stocking Club" choral hymns and clouds of incense gathering about the altar in Portman Square! The volume is deemed "a wonderful performance," by those echoes of contemporary prepossessions, the compilers of dictionary-biography: even the poet Cowper placed Mrs. Montague "at the head of all that is called learned."

This lady's knowledge of the English drama, and the genius of our ancient literature, is as vague and indistinct as that of the Greek tragedians, to whom she frequently refers, without, we are told, any intimacy with the originals. She discovers many bombast speeches even in "Macbeth;" but she triumphantly exclaims, "Shakespeare redeems the nonsense, the indecorum, the irregularities of his plays;" irregularities which seem to her incomprehensible. Her criticisms are the random

ment, the Cæsar of Shakespeare uses metaphorical expressions. He would not yield to —

> "That which melteth fools: I mean sweet words,
> Low-crooked curt'sies, and base *spaniel-fawning*.
> If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,
> *I'd spurn thee like a cur out of my way.*"

This natural style was doubtless "trop familier" for the polished Frenchman, and his version is malicious; and he delights to detail every motion of a spaniel, even to the licking of the feet of his master! —

> "*Les airs d'un chien couchant pouvant toucher un sot;*
> *Flatte, prie à genoux, et lèche-moi les pieds* —
> *Va, je te renverai comme un chien.*"

Renser can only be translated by so mean a phrase as "a sound beating;" while to spurn is no ignoble action, and is used rather in a poetical than familiar style.

reflections of her feelings; but trusting to our feelings alone, unaccompanied by that knowledge on which they should be based, is confiding in a capricious, and often an erring dictator, governed by our own humors, or by fashionable tastes.

Thus have we viewed our bard through distinct eras, from the time in which he was not yet pre-eminently distinguished among his numerous peers: the Shakespeare of his own day could not be the Shakespeare of posterity; his rivals could only view that genius in its progress; and though there was not one who was a Shakespeare, yet, in that bursting competition of genius, there were many who were themselves Shakespearian. In a succeeding era, novel and unnational tastes prevailed: to the Drydenists, who, dismissing the language of nature, substituted a false nature in their exaggerated passion, Shakespeare might have said of himself, —

> "I dare do all that may become a man,
> Who dares do more is none;" —

and when tried by the conventional code of criticism, and condemned, the poet of creation might have exclaimed to Rymer and to Shaftesbury, —

> "The poet's eye,
> Bodying forth the forms of THINGS UNKNOWN,
> . . . . . gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Emerging into light through his modern editors, the volume in the hands of all men, the English public, with whom the classical model was held as nothing, received him as their national bard; for every one read in "the chance" that could only "hit suddenly," as Butler has described the genius of Shakespeare, revelations about himself. It seemed as if the poet had served in all professions, taking every color of public and domestic life. Lawyers have detected their law-cunning in the legal contrivances of the poet; physicians have commented on the madness of Lear, and the mystery of Hamlet; statesmen have meditated on profound speculations

in civil polity; the merchant and the mechanic, the soldier and the maiden,—all, from the crowned head to the sailor-boy,—found that, in the cursory pages of the great dramatist, he had disclosed to all the tribes of mankind the secrets of their condition. The plenitude and the pliancy of the Shakespearian mind may be manifested by a trivial circumstance. We are a people of pamphleteers; a free country has a free communication; and many, for interest or vainglory, rush to catch the public ear. To point out the drift of their effusions, and aid a dubious title by an unquestioned authority, the greater number of these incessant fugitives, coming in all shapes, will be usually found to have recourse for this apposite thought, and crowning motto, to the prodigal pages of Shakespeare, who, thus pressed into their service, has often made the drift of the pamphleteer intelligible, vainly sought in his confused pamphlet.

When the strange condition of his works made the poet the noble prey of a brood of commentators, antiquarian and philological, from that generation he derived nothing of that abstract greatness with which we are now accustomed to contemplate a genius which seems universal. It was not by new readings, contested restorations, conjectural emendations, and notes explanatory of customs and phrases, however useful, that we could penetrate into the depths of a genius profound as Nature herself; and it was only when philosophical critics tested this genius by their own principles, that the singularity was discovered to Europe.

Hitherto the critical art had been verbal or didactic or dogmatic; but when the mind engaged itself in watching its own operations by analysis and combination, and when the laws of its constitution formed a science, educing principles, and exploring the sources of our emotions, all arbitrary conventions were only rated at their worth, while the final appeal was made to our own experience: these nobler critics founded the demonstrations of their metaphysical reasonings on our

consciousness. This novel philosophy was more surely and more deeply laid in the nature of man, and whatever concerns man, than the arbitrary code of the Stagyrite, who had founded many of his laws on what had only been customs. We were passing from the history of the human understanding to the history of the imagination; and the whole beautiful process of the intellectual faculties was a new revelation. Theories of taste and systems of philosophy multiplied our sympathies, and amplified our associations: the intellectual powers had their history, and the passions were laid bare in their eloquent anatomy. But, in these severe investigations, this new school had to seek for illustrations and for examples which might familiarize their abstract principles; and these philosophical critics appealed to Nature, and drew them from her poetic interpreter.

It was the philosophical critics, who, by trying Shakespeare by these highest tests, fixed him on his solitary eminence. From Lord Kaimes, through a brilliant succession of many a Longinus, the public has been instructed. The strokes of nature and the bursts of passion, the exuberance of his humor and the pathos of his higher mood, untutored minds had felt more or less, and Shakespeare was lauded for what they considered to be his "natural parts;" and it was parts only on which they could decide, for the true magnitude they could not yet comprehend. The loneliness of his genius, in its profundity or its elevation, and the delicacy of its delineations, the mighty space his universal faculty extends before us, — these they could never reach! The phenomenon had not been explained; the instruments had not yet been invented which could fathom its depths, or take the admeasurement at the meridian.

But, if philosophical criticism has been so far favorable to develop the truth of nature in the great poet, it is not a consequence that Shakespeare himself produced his poetry on those revolving systems of metaphysics by which some late

æsthetic and rhetorical German critics have somewhat offuscated the solitary luminary. They have developed such a system of intricate thinking in the genius of the poet, such a refined connection between his conceptions and the execution of his dramatic personages, they have so grafted their own imagination upon his, that at times it becomes doubtful whether we are influenced by the imagination of the critic, or that of the poet. In this seraphic mode of criticism, the poem becomes mythic, and the poet a myth: in the power of abstraction, these critics have passed beyond the regions of humanity. We soar with them into the immensity of space, and we tremble as if we stood alone in the universe; we have lost sight of Nature, as we seem to have passed her human boundaries. The ancient divinity of poetry itself, even Homer, is absorbed in the Shakespearian myth; for Shakespeare, to snatch a feather from the fiery wing of Coleridge, is "the Spinosistic deity, an omnipresent creativeness."

Thou whose rapt spirit beheld the vision of human existence, "the wheel in the middle of the wheel, and the spirit of the living creature within," and wrotest thy inspirations, how shall we describe thy faculty? To paint lightning, and to give it no motion, is the doom of the baffled artist. Something, however, we may conceive of the Shakespearian faculty when we say that it consisted in a facility of feeling, an aptitude in following those trains of thought which constitute that undeviating propriety, in the consonance of the character with its action, and the passion with its language. Whether the poet followed the romancer or the chronicler in his conception of a dramatic character, he at the first step struck into that undeviating track of our humanity amid the accidents of its position. The progress of each dramatic personage was therefore a unity of diction and character, of sentiment and action: all was direct, for there was no effort where all was impulse; and the dramatic genius of Shakespeare, as if wholly unstudied, seems to have formed the habit of his intellectual cha-

racter. Was this unerring Shakespearian faculty an intuitive evidence, like certain axioms? or may we venture to fancy that our poet, as it were, had discovered the very mathematics of metaphysics?

Besides this facility of feeling, appropriating to itself the whole sphere of human existence, there is another characteristic of our national bard. He struck out a diction which I conceive will be found in no other poet. What is usually termed diction, would, applied to Shakespeare, be more definite, and its quality more happily explained, if we call it *expression*, and observed in what magic the Shakespearian expression lies. This diction has been subject to the censure of obscurity. Modern critics have ascribed the invention of our dramatic blank verse to Shakespeare; but Shakespeare was no inventor in the usual acceptation of the term, and assuredly was not of unrhymed metre: what, indeed, are imperfectly or rarely found among his tuneful predecessors and contemporaries, are the sweetness of his versification, combined with ceaseless imagery; we view the image through the transparency of the thought never disturbing it; it is neither a formal simile nor an expanded metaphor, — it is a single expression, a sensible image combined with an emotion.

THE "HUMOURS" OF JONSON.

JONSON studied "THE HUMOURS," and not the passions. What were these "humours"? The bard himself does not distinguish them from "manners:" —

"Their MANNERS, now called HUMOURS, feed the stage."

The ambiguity of the term has confounded it with humor itself: they are, however, so far distinct, that a "humour," that is, some absorbing singularity in a character, may not necessarily be very humorous; it may be only absurd.

When this term "humours" became popular, it sunk into a mystification. Every one suddenly had his "humour." It served on all occasions as an argument which closed all discussion. The impertinent insisted on the privilege of his "humour." "The idiot," who chose to be "apish," declared that a lock of hair fantastically hung, or the dancing feather in his cap, were his "humour." A moral quality, or an affection of the mind, was thus indiscriminately applied to things themselves, when they were objects of affectation or whim. The phrase was tossed about till it bore no certain meaning. Such indeed is the fate of all fashionable cant, — ephemera which, left to themselves, die away with their season.

The ludicrous incongruity of applying these physical qualities to moral acts, and apologizing for their caprices by their "humours," was too exquisitely ludicrous not to be seized on as the property of our comic satirists. Shakespeare and Jonson have given perpetuity to this term of the vocabulary in

vogue, and Jonson has dignified it by transferring it to his comic art. Shakespeare has personified these "humours" in that whimsical, blunt, grotesque Corporal Nym, the pith of whose reason and the chorus of whose tune are his "humours;" admirably contrasting with that other "humourist," his companion, ranting the fag-ends of tragedies "in Cambyses' vein." Jonson, more elaborate, according to his custom, could not quit his subject till he had developed the whole system in two comedies of "Every Man IN" and "Every Man OUT of his HUMOUR."

The vague term was least comprehended when most in use. Asper, the censor of the times,* desires Mitis, who had used it, "to answer what was meant:" Mitis, a neutralized man, "who never acts, and has therefore no character," can only reply, "Answer what?" The term was too plain or too obscure for that simple soul to attach any idea to a word current with all the world.

The philosopher then offers —

> "To give these ignorant well-spoken days
> Some taste of their abuse of this word HUMOUR."

This rejoices his friend Cordatus: —

> "Oh! do not let your purpose fall, good Asper:
> It cannot but arrive most acceptable,
> Chiefly to such as have the happiness
> Daily to see how *the poor innocent word*
> *Is racked and tortured.*"

It is then that Asper, or rather Jonson, plunges into a dissertation on "the elements," which, according to the ancient philosophy, compound the fragile body of man with the four "humours," or moistures.†

Had not this strange phrase been something more than a modish coinage, it had not endured so long and spread so

* In the Introduction to "Every Man out of his Humour."

† See Nares's "Glossary" for an account of these "humours" in their philosophical sense.

wide. Other temporary phrases of this nature were equally in vogue, nor have they escaped the vigilant causticity of Jonson. Such were "the vaporers" and "the jeerers;" but these had not substance in them to live, and Jonson only cast on them a side-glance. "The humours" were derived from a more elevated source than the airy nothingness of fashionable cant.

How "the humours" came into vogue, may, I think, be discovered. A work long famous, and of which multiplied editions, in all the languages of Europe, were everywhere spread, deeply engaged public attention: this work was "Huarté's Examen de Ingenios," translated into English as "the Examination of Men's Wits." It was long imagined that the Spaniard had drawn aside the veil from Nature herself, revealing among her varieties those of the human character. The secret, "to what profession a man will be most apt," must have taken in a wide circle of inquirers. In the fifth chapter, we learn that "the differences of men's wits depend on the hot, the moist, and the dry:" the system is carried on through "the elements" and "the humours." The natural philosophy is of the schools; but the author's anatomy of the brain amounted to a demonstration of the phenomenon, as it seemed to him. He, however, had struck out some hardy novelties and some mendacious illustrations. The system was long prevalent; and every one now conceived himself to be the passive agent of his predominant temperament or "humour," and looked for that page which was to discover to him his own genius. This work in its day made as great a sensation as the "Esprit" of Helvetius at a later time; and in effect resembled the phrenology of our day, and was as ludicrously applied. The first English version — for there are several — appeared in 1594; and we find, that, four years after, "the humours" were so rife that they served to plot a whole comedy, as well as to furnish an abundance of what they called "epigrams," or short satires of the reigning mode.

Jonson's intense observation was microscopical when turned to the minute evolutions of society, while his diversified learning at all times bore him into a nobler sphere of comprehension. This taste for reality, and this fulness of knowledge on whatever theme he chose, had a reciprocal action; and the one could not go without the other. Our poet doggedly set to "a humour" through its slightest anomalies, and, in the pride of his comic art, expanded his prototype. Yet this was but half the labor which he loved: his mind was stored with the most burdensome knowledge; and to the scholar the various erudition which he had so diligently acquired threw a more permanent light over those transient scenes which the painter of manners had so carefully copied.

The pertinacity of Jonson, in heaping such minute particularities of "a humour," has invariably turned his great dramatic personages into complete personifications of some single propensity, or mode of action; and thus the individual is changed into an abstract being. The passion itself is wholly there; but this man of one volition is thrown out of the common brotherhood of man, — an individual so artificially constructed as to include a whole species. Our poet, if we may decide by the system which he pursued, seems to have considered his prodigious dramatic characters as the conduit-pipes to convey the abundant waters which he had gathered into his deep cisterns.

It is surely evident that such elaborate dramatic personages were not extemporary creations thrown off in the heat of the pen. Our poet professed to instruct as much as to delight; and it was in the severity of thought and the austerity of his genius that his nobler conceptions arose. His studious habits have been amply ascertained. When he singled out "a humour," to possess himself of every trait of the anomalous dispositions he contemplated, he must gradually have accumulated, as they occurred, the particulars whence to form the aggregate; and like Swift, in his "Advice to Servants," in

his provident diligence he must have jotted down a mass such as we see so curiously unfolded in "the character of the persons" prefixed to "Every Man in his Humour," — a singular dramatic sketch. To this mass, with due labor and shaping, he gave the baptism of an expressive name, and conceived that a name would necessarily become a person. If he worked in this manner, as I believe he did, and "the characters" we have just seen confirm the suggestion, it sufficiently explains the space he required to contain his mighty and unmixed character, — the several made into one; and which we so frequently observe he was always reluctant to quit, while a stroke in his jottings remained untold. His cup, indeed, often runs over, and sometimes the dregs hang on our lips. We have had perhaps too many of these jottings.

But, if Jonson has been accused of having servilely given portraits, — and we have just seen in what an extraordinary way they are portraits, — his learning has also been alleged as something more objectionable in the dramatic art; and we have often heard something of the pedantry of Jonson.

In that elaborate personage, Sir Epicure Mammon, we have have not only the alchemist and the epicurean to answer that characterizing name, but we are not to be set free without enduring the obscure babble of "the projection" and "the projectors," — which assuredly cost some patient sweat of that curious brain, — and further being initiated into the gastronomic mysteries of the kitchens of the ancients. Volpone, and "the gentleman who loves not noise," his other masterpieces, like Sir Epicure Mammon, are of the same colossal character. In "the Fox" and "the Fly," the richest veins of antiquity are melted down into his own copious invention; nor had the ancients themselves a picture so perfect, or a scene so living, of those legacy-hunters, though that vice was almost a profession with them. If true learning in the art of the drama be peccant, our poet is a very saintly sinner; and Jonson indeed was, as Cleaveland has hailed his manes, —

"The wonder of a learned age."

The fate of Jonson has inflicted its penalties on his very excellences. Some modern critics, whose delicacy of taste in its natural feebleness could not strain itself to the vigor of Jonson, have strangely failed to penetrate into the depths of that mighty mind; and some modern poets have delivered their sad evidence, that for them the Coryphæus of our elder dramatists has become unintelligible. Of all our dramatists, Jonson, the Juvenal of our drama, alone professed to study the "humour" or manners of the age: but manners vanish with their generation; and, ere the century closes, even actors cannot be procured to personate characters of which they view no prototype. They remain as the triumphs of art and genius, for those who are studious of this rare combination; but they were the creatures of "the age," and not for "all time," as Jonson himself energetically and prophetically has said of Shakespeare.*

Shadwell, who has left us nearly twenty comedies, and "the god of whose idolatry" was Jonson, in his copious prefaces and prologues and epilogues, overflows with his egotistical admiration of "the humours." In his preface to "the Sullen Lovers," he says that we are not to expect the intrigue of comedy, plot and business, lest he should "let fall the humour." And in "the Humourist," he says, "Mr. Jonson was very unjustly taxed for personating particular men," in the writing of his humours; "but it will ever be the fate of them that write the humours of the town." We have more of this in the dedication of "the Virtuoso," where we are told that "four of the humours are entirely new." We have his definition of these "humours" in the epilogue to "the Humourists," and which is neatly expressed:—

"A humour is the bias of the mind,
By which, with violence, 'tis one way inclined:
It makes our action lean on one side still;
And, in all changes, that way bends the will."

* "He was not of an age, but for all time." — *Jonson.*

It is singular, that, as Jonson has been somewhat censured for drawing so elaborately these artificial men and their humours, Shadwell should have adopted the notion, and made it the staple of his comic invention.

When men were more insulated, and society was less monotonous, than at the present day, those whom we now call humourists, without, however, any allusion to the system of the humours, and whom we now rarely meet with, allowed their peculiar tastes and fancies to be more prominent in their habits, so as to make them more observable, and more the subject of ridicule, than we find them in the present level decorum of society.

DRAYTON.

"THE POLY-OLBION" of DRAYTON is a stupendous work; "a strange Herculean toil," as the poet himself has said; and it was the elaborate production of many years. The patriotic bard fell a victim to its infelicitous but glorious conception; and posterity may discover a grandeur in this labor of love, which was unfelt by his contemporaries.

The "Poly-olbion" is a chorographical description of England and Wales; an amalgamation of antiquarianism, of topography, and of history; materials not the most ductile for the creations of poetry. This poem is said to have the accuracy of a road-book; and the poet has contributed some notices, which add to the topographic stores of CAMDEN: for this has our poet extorted an alms of commendation from such a niggardly antiquary as Bishop Nicholson, who confesses that this work affords "a much truer account of this kingdom than could be well expected from the pen of a poet."

The grand theme of this poet was his fatherland! The Muse of Drayton passes by every town and tower: each tells some tale of ancient glory, or of some "worthy" who must never die. The local associations of legends and customs are animated by the personifications of mountains and rivers; and often, in some favorite scenery, he breaks forth with all the emotion of a true poet. The imaginative critic has described the excursions of our Muse with responsive sympathy. "He has not," says Lamb, "left a rivulet so narrow that it may be stepped over without honorable mention, and has associated

hills and streams with life and passion beyond the dreams of old mythology." But the journey is long, and the conveyance may be tedious: the reader, accustomed to the decasyllabic or heroic verse, soon finds himself breathless among the protracted and monotonous Alexandrines, unless he should relieve his ear from the encumbrance by resting on the cæsura, and thus divide those extended lines by the alternate grace of a ballad-stanza. The artificial machinery of Drayton's personifications of mountains and rivers, though these may be often allowed the poet, yet they seem more particularly ludicrous, as they are crowded together on the maps prefixed to each county, where this arbitrary mythology, masculine and feminine, are to be seen standing by the heads of rivers, or at the entrances of towns.

This extraordinary poem remains without a parallel in the poetical annals of any people; and it may excite our curiosity to learn its origin. The genealogy of poetry is often suspicious; but I think we may derive the birth of the "Polyolbion" from LELAND'S magnificent view of his designed work on "Britain," and that hint expanded by the "Britannia" of CAMDEN, who inherited the mighty industry, without the poetical spirit, of LELAND: DRAYTON embraced both.

It is a nice question to decide how far history may be admitted into poetry: like "Addison's Campaign," the poem may end in a rhymed gazette. And, in any other work of invention, a fiction, by too free an infusion of historical matter, can only produce that monster called "the Romance of History," — a nonsensical contradiction in terms, for neither can be both; or that other seductive and dangerous association of real persons and fictitious incidents, — the historical romance! It is remarkable that DRAYTON censures DANIEL, his brother poet, for being *too historical* in his "Civil Wars," and thus transgressing the boundaries of history and poetry, of truth and invention. Of these just boundaries, however, he himself had no clear notion. Drayton, in his "Baron's Wars," sunk

into a grave chronicler; and, in the "Poly-olbion," we see his Muse treading a labyrinth of geography, of history, and of topography!

The author of the "Poly-olbion" may truly be considered as the inventor of a class of poems peculiar to our country, and which, when I was young, were popular or fashionable. These are loco-descriptive poems. Such were Denham's "Cooper's Hill," * and its numerous, and some happy, imitations. In these local descriptions, some favored spot in the landscape opens to the poet not only the charm of its natural appearance, but in the prospect lie scenes of the past. Imagination, like a telescope fixed on the spot, brings nearer to his eyes those associations which combine emotion with description; and the contracted spot, whence the bard scattered the hues of his fancy, is aggrandized by noble truths.

The first edition of the "Poly-olbion," in 1613, consisted of eighteen "songs," or cantos, and every one enriched by the notes and illustrations of the poet's friend, our great national antiquary, SELDEN, whose avarice of words in these recondite stores conceals almost as many facts as he affords phrases. This volume was ill received by the incurious readers of that age. Drayton had vainly imagined that the nobles and gentlemen of England would have felt a filial interest in the tale of their fathers, commemorated in these poetic annals, and an honorable pride in their domains here so graphically pictured. But no voice, save those of a few melodious brothers, cheered the lonely lyrist, who had sung on every mountain, and whose verse had flowed with every river. After a hopeless suspension of nine years, the querulous author sent forth the concluding volume to join its neglected brother. It ap-

* Dr. Johnson has ascribed the invention of local poetry to Denham, who, he thought, had "traced a new scheme of poetry, copied by Garth and Pope, after whose names little will be gained by an enumeration of smaller poets." Johnson and the critics of his day were wholly unacquainted with the fathers of our poetry; nor is it true that we have not had loco-descriptive poems since Garth and Pope, which may rank with theirs.

peared with a second edition of the first part, which is nothing more than the unsold copies of the first, to which the twelve additional "songs" are attached, separately paged. These last come no longer enriched by the notes of Selden, or even embellished by those fanciful maps which the unfortunate poet now found too costly an ornament. Certain accidental marks of the printer betray the bibliographical secret, that the second edition was in reality but the first.* The preface to the second part is remarkable for its inscription, in no good humor, —

TO ANY THAT WILL READ IT!

There was yet no literary public to appeal to, to save the neglected work which the great SELDEN had deemed worthy of his studies: but there was, as the poet indignantly designates them, "a cattle, *odi profanum vulgus et arceo*, of which I account them, be they never so great." And "the cattle" conceived that there was nothing in this island worthy studying. We had not yet learned to esteem ourselves at a time

* Perhaps none of our poets have been more luckless in their editors than Drayton. He himself published a folio edition of his works in 1619; but some of his more interesting productions, now lying before me, are contained in a small volume, 1631, — the year in which he died.

A modern folio edition was published by Dodsley in 1748. The titlepage assures us that this volume contains *all* his writings; while a later edition, in four volumes 8vo, 1753, pretends to supply the deficiencies of the former, which at length Dodsley had discovered; but it is awkwardly done by an *Appendix*, and is still deficient. The rapid demand for a new edition of Drayton between 1748 and 1753 bears a suspicious aspect. An intelligent bibliopolist, Mr. Rodd, informs me that this *octavo* edition is in fact the identical *folio*, only arranged to the octavo form by a contrivance, well known among printers, at the time of printing the folio. The separation of the additional poems in the Appendix confirms this suggestion.

Of the "Poly-olbion," the edition called the second, of 1622, has fetched an excessive price; while the first, considered incomplete, may be procured at a very moderate price. The possessor of the first edition, however, enjoys the whole treasure of Selden's lore. Mr. Southey, in his "Specimens of Our Ancient Poets," has reprinted the entire "Poly-olbion" with his usual judgment; but, unhappily, the rich stores of Selden the publishers probably deemed superfluous. Drayton is worthy of a complete edition of his works.

when six editions of Camden's "Britannia," in the original Latin, were diffusing the greatness of England throughout Europe.

But, though this poet devoted much of his life to this great antiquarian and topographic poem, he has essayed his powers in almost every species of poetry: fertility of subject, and fluency of execution, are his characteristics. He has written historical narratives too historical; heroic epistles hardly Ovidian; elegies on several occasions, or rather domestic epistles, of a Horatian cast; pastorals, in which there is a freshness of imagery, breathing with the life of nature; and songs and satire and comedy. In comedy he had not been unsuccessful; but in satire he was considered more indignant than caustic. There is one species of poetry, rare among us, in which he has been eminently successful: his "Nymphidia, or Court of Faerie," is a model of the grotesque, those arabesques of poetry, those lusory effusions on chimerical objects. There are grave critics who would deny the poet the liberty allowed to the painter. The "Nymphidia" seems to have been ill understood by some modern critics. The poet has been censured for "neither imparting nor feeling that half-believing seriousness which enchants us in the wild and magical touches of Shakspeare;" but the poet designed an exquisitely ludicrous fiction. Drayton has, however, relieved the grotesque scenes by rising into the higher strains of poetry, such as Gray might not have disdained.

It was the misfortune of Drayton not to have been a popular poet; which we may infer from his altercations with his booksellers, and from their frequent practice of prefixing new titlepages, with fresher dates, to the first editions of his poems. That he was also in perpetual quarrel with his Muse, appears by his frequent alteration of his poems. He often felt that curse of an infelicitous poet, that his diligence was more active than his creative power. Drayton was a poet of volume; but his genius was peculiar: from an unhappy facility in composi-

tion, in reaching excellence he too often declined into mediocrity. A modern reader may be struck by the purity and strength of his diction: his strong descriptive manner lays hold of the fancy; but he is always a poet of reason, and never of passion. He cannot be considered as a poet of mediocrity, who has written so much above that level; nor a poet who can rank among the highest class, who has often flattened his spirit by its redundance.

There was another cause, besides his quarrel with his Muse, which threw a shade over the life of Drayton. He had been forward to greet James the First, on his accession to the throne of England, with a congratulatory ode; but for some cause, which has not been revealed, he tells us, "he suffered shipwreck by his forward pen." The king appears to have conceived a personal dislike to the bard, — a circumstance not usual with James towards either poets or flatterers. It seems to arise from some state-matter; for Drayton tells us, —

"I feare, as I do stabbing, this word, state."

According to Oldys, Drayton appears to have been an agent in the Scottish king's intercourse with his English friends: some unlucky incident probably occurred, which might have indisposed the monarch towards his humble friend. The unhappy result of his court to the new sovereign cast a sour and melancholy humor over his whole life: Drayton, in his "Elegy" to his brother-poet, Sandys, has perpetuated his story.

THE

PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY OF RAWLEIGH.

RAWLEIGH is a great name in our history, and fills a space in our imagination. His military and maritime genius looked for new regions, to found, perhaps, his own dominion. Yet was this hero the courtier, holding "the glass of fashion;" and the profound statesman, whose maxims and whose counsels, Milton, the severe Milton, carefully collected; and the poet, who, when he found a master-genius lingering in a desert, joyed to pay him the homage of his protection. Rawleigh, who in his youthful hours, and even through his vagrant voyages, was at all times a student, in the ripeness of his knowledge was a sage. Thus he, who seemed through all his restless days to have lived only for his own age, was the true servant of posterity.

If ever there have been men whose temperaments and dispositions have harmonized within themselves faculties seemingly incompatible, with an equability of force combining the extremes of our nature, it would not be difficult to believe that Sir Walter Rawleigh was one of this rarest species. Various and opposite were his enterprises; but, whichever was the object, his aptitude was prompt: for he is equally renowned for his active and his contemplative powers; in neither he seems to have held a secondary rank. And he has left the nation a collection of his writings, which claim for their author the just honors of being one of the founders of our literature.

This is the perspective view of his *character* as it appears at a distance. His was a strange and adventurous *life:* the shifting scenes seem gathering together as in a tale of fiction, full of as surprising incidents and as high passions, and as intricate and mysterious, as the involutions of a well-invented fable. And, in this various history of a single individual, should we be dazzled by the haughtiness of prosperity, and even be startled by the baseness of humiliation, still shall we find one sublime episode more glorious than the tale, and as pathetic a close as ever formed the catastrophe of a tragic romance. I pursue this history as far as concerns its psychological development.

It was the destiny of Rawleigh to be the artificer of his own fortunes, and in that arduous course to pass through pinching ways and sharp turns. The younger son of a family whose patrimony had not lasted with their antiquity, he had nothing left but his enterprise and his sword: his mind had decided on his calling. The romantic adventures of the Spanish in new regions had early kindled the master-mind which takes its lasting bent from its first strong impulse. The Spaniards and their new world, "the treasures and the paradises" which they enjoyed, haunted his dreams to his latest days. The age in which the great struggle had commenced in Europe for the independence of nations and of faiths was as favorable to the indulgence of the military passion as it was pregnant with political instruction. No period in modern history was so prodigal of statesmen and of heroes; and Rawleigh was to be both.

Two noble schools for military education were opened for our youthful volunteer: among the Protestants in France, when they assembled their own armies, and subsequently in the Netherlands, under the Prince of Orange, Rawleigh learned the discipline of a valorous but a wary leader, and beheld in Don John of Austria the hardihood of a presumptuous commander, whose "self-confidence could overcome the

greatest difficulties, yet in his judgment so weak, that he could not manage the least."

The captain who had fleshed his sword in many a field now cast his fortunes in that other element which led Columbus to discovery, and Pizarro to conquest. Rawleigh had an uterine brother, whom he justly called his "true brother,"—Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a great navigator, and the projector of a new passage to the Indies. An expedition was fitted out by them to colonize some parts of North America: his first maritime essay was frustrated by a disastrous accident. But the intrepid activity of Rawleigh allowed no pause; and now it turned against the rebellious kerns of Ireland. His disputes with Grey, the lord-deputy, brought them before the council-board in the presence of the queen. Our adventurer knew how to value this fortunate opportunity. His eloquent tale struck his lordly adversary dumb, and was not slightly noticed by Elizabeth. The soldier of fortune was now hanging loosely about the circle of the court, watchful of another fortunate moment to attract the queen's attention. There was a very remarkable disposition in this extraordinary man, as I have elsewhere noticed, of practising petty artifices in the affairs of life. The gay cavalier flung his rich embroidered mantle across the plashy spot for an instantaneous foot-cloth; not unknowing that an act of gallantry was sure to win the susceptible coquetry of his royal mistress. His personal grace, and his tall stature, and the charm of his voluble elocution, when once admitted into the presence, were irresistible. On the same system as he had cast his mantle before the queen, he scratched on a window-pane, likely to catch her majesty's eye, that verse expressive of his "desire" and "his fear to climb," to which the queen condescended to add her rhyme.

The man of genius was not yet entangled in the meshes of political parties, and was still contemplating on an imaginary land north of the Gulf of Florida, as studious of the art of navigation as he had been of the art of war. He has left a

number of essays on both these subjects, composed for Prince Henry in the succeeding reign. He was already in favor with the queen; for she sanctioned a renewal of the unfortunate expedition under his brother. Rawleigh had the largest vessel built under his own eye, for he was skilful in naval architecture; and he named it "the Rawleigh," anticipating the day when it should leave that name to a city or a kingdom. It was on this occasion that the queen commanded Rawleigh to present to his brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a precious gem, on which was engraven an anchor guided by a lady, graciously desiring in return the picture of the hardy adventurer. Such were the arts of female coquetry which entered so admirably into her system of policy, kindling such personal enthusiasm in the professed lovers of their royal mistress, while she resigned her heroes to their enterprises at their own honorable cost of their fortunes or their lives. In this second expedition, Sir Humphrey Gilbert realized a discovery of what was then called "the Newfoundland," of which he took possession for England with the due formalities; but, on his return, his slender bark foundered, and thus obscurely perished one of the most enlightened of that heroic race of our maritime discoverers, — the true fathers of future colonies.

Rawleigh, unrolling an old map which had been presented to her royal father, charmed the queen by the visions which had long charmed himself. Her majesty granted letters-patent to secure to him the property of the countries which he might discover or might conquer. Rawleigh minutely planned the future operations; and, by the captains he sent (for the queen would not part with her favorite), that country was discovered to which had the royal maiden not so eagerly given the name of "Virginia," had probably borne that of Rawleigh; for subsequently he betrayed this latent design when he proposed founding a city with that romantic name.

But the pressing interests of our home-affairs withdrew his mind from undiscovered dominions. Rawleigh was a chief

adviser of Elizabeth in the great Spanish invasion. He was eminently active in various expeditions, and not less serviceable in parliament. The ceaseless topic of his counsels, and the frequent exercise of his pen, was the alarming aggrandizement of the Spanish power. At this day, perhaps, we can form no adequate notion of that Catholic and colossal dominion which Rawleigh dwells on. "No prince in the west hath spread his wing far over his nest but the Spaniard, and made many attempts to make themselves masters of all Europe." Possibly he may have ascribed too great an influence to the treasures of India, which seem to have been always exaggerated: however, he assures us, and as a statesman he may have felt a conviction, that "its Indian gold endangers and disturbs all the nations of Europe; it creeps into counsels, purchases intelligence, and sets bound loyalty at liberty in the greatest monarchies. When they dare not with their own forces invade, they basely entertain the traitors and vagabonds of all nations." We have here a complete picture of those arts of policy, which, in the revolutionary system of France, endangered Europe; and which may yet, should ever a colossal power again overshadow its independent empires.

To clip "the wing that had spread far over its nest," by cutting off the uninterrupted supplies of the plate-fleets of Spain, was a course in which the queen only perceived the earnest loyalty of the intrepid adventurer; nor was that loyalty less for its perfect accordance with his own personal concerns.

Rawleigh and his joint adventurers in these discoveries were carrying on their expeditions at the risk of their private fortunes; and it appears that his own zeal had beguiled young men to change their immovable lands for light pinnaces. The prudential ministers looked on with a cold eye; and the economical sovereign, as she was wont, rewarded her hero in her own way. Elizabeth bestowed titular honors, and cut out a seigniory in Ireland from the Earl of Desmond's domains,

which Rawleigh's own sword had chiefly won; twelve thousand acres, yielding no rents; dismantled farms and tenantless hamlets, — an estate of fire and blood! A more substantial patent was conferred on him, — to license taverns for the sale of wines; and at length it was enlarged to levy tonnage and poundage, specifying that the grant was "to sustain his great charges in the discovery of remote countries."

This was one of those odious monopolies by which the parsimonious sovereign pretended to reward the services of the individual by the infliction of a great public grievance, infinitely more intolerable than any pension-list; for every monopoly was a traffic admitting all sorts of abuses. Rawleigh's inventive faculty often broke forth into humbler schemes in domestic affairs. He seems first to have perceived, in the expansion of society, the difficulty of communication for the wants of life. He projected an office for universal agency; and in this he anticipated that useful intelligence which we now recognize by the term of advertisement. New enterprises and ceaseless occupation were the aliment of that restless and noble spirit. But these monopolies, severely exacted, provoking complaints and contests, were one among other causes which may account for Rawleigh's unpopularity, even at his meridian.

To his absorbing devotion to obtain the queen's favor, he has himself ascribed his numerous enemies. While Elizabeth listened to his ingenious solutions of all her inquiries, many close at hand took umbrage lest they themselves were being supplanted; while he himself, with marked expressions, disdained all popularity. Hence, from opposite quarters, we learn how haughtily his genius bore him in commanding the world under him. And there is no doubt, as Aubrey tells us, that he was "damnably proud." Even in the height of court favor, this great man was obnoxious to the people. This we see by an anecdote of Tarleton, the jester of Elizabeth, famed for his extemporal acting. Performing before the queen,

while Rawleigh stood by her majesty, shuffling a pack of cards, and pointing to the royal box, the jesting comedian exclaimed, "See, the knave commands the queen!" Her majesty frowned; but, the audience applauding, the queen, ever chary in checking any popular feeling, reserved her anger till the following day, when Tarleton was banished from the royal presence. Nor was Rawleigh less unpopular in the succeeding reign, when the mob hooted this great man, and when this great man condescended to tell them how much he despised such rogues and varlets! The inconsiderate multitude, in the noble preface to his great work, he compared to "dogs, who always bark at those they know not, and whose nature is to accompany one another in these clamors."

However busied by the discovery of remote countries, the armed ships of Rawleigh often brought into port a Spanish prize. The day arrived,—the short but golden day,—when, as his contemporary and a secretary of state has told us, "he who was first to roll through want, and disability to exist, before he came to a repose," betrayed a sudden affluence—in the magnificence about him—in the train of his followers, when he seemed to be the rival of the chivalrous Essex,—in the gorgeousness of his dress, from the huge diamond which buttoned his feather, to his shoes powdered with pearls, darting from every point of his person the changeful light of countless jewels. In this habiliment, fitted to be the herald of that goddess of beauty to which Elizabeth was familiarly compared, beside the queen during her royal progresses, stood the captain of her guard; and her eyes were often solaced as they dwelt on the minion of fortune, her own prosperous adventurer: it was with secret satisfaction that she knew his treasure was not taken out of her exchequer. It could only have been some great Spanish galleon, like that of "the Madre de Dios," which furnished Rawleigh with that complete suit of armor of solid silver which fixed all eyes at the tilt; or which went to build the stately mansion of Sherborne,

and to plan its fanciful gardens and groves, drawing the river through the rocks. Curious in horticulture as in the slightest arts he practised, Rawleigh's hands transplanted the first orange-trees which breathed in this colder clime, as he had given Ireland the Virginian potato, and England the Virginian tobacco, and perhaps the delicious ananas. But Sherborne was church land. It is said that Sir Walter had often cast a wistful eye on it as it lay in his journeys from Devonshire. It gave umbrage to some in Church and State, that, by frightening a timid Bishop of Salisbury, he had prevailed on him to alienate the manor of Sherborne from his see in favor of the crown, that it might the more securely be transferred to him who had coveted it, till another coveter, in the despicable Carr, plundered him who had despoiled the diocese.

A genius versatile as ambitious, moving in the eventful court of a female sovereign, though often musing on "remote countries" or Spanish galleons, could not stand as a mere spectator amid the agitated amphitheatre of politics, nor in the luxuriance of courtly idleness save himself from softer, but not always less fatal, intrigues. Rawleigh was the victim of love and of politics.

On his first entrance to a court-life, Rawleigh found Burleigh and Leicester watchful of each other. They were the heads of dark factions which clouded the court of Elizabeth, and crooked were the ways our aspirant had to wind. Leicester seems to have been an early patron of Rawleigh, by means of his nephew, Sir Philip Sidney. At length, perceiving his ascendency over the queen, the great lord, to overturn this idol of womanish caprice, introduced his youthful son-in-law, the famous and unfortunate Essex; nor had he, who himself had been a reigning favorite, miscalculated on the fascination of a new lover. The contest for the royal smile became too apparent: ruptures and reconciliations followed, till death closed these eventful jealousies. Rawleigh

had glided over to the opposition under the subtle and the plotting Cecil.

An intrigue of less guiltiness than these dark machinations of heartless men banished Rawleigh from court. In the dalliance of the ladies of the privy-chamber, through the long tedious days of audience, he once too wittily threw out an observation on that seductive but spotless circle, the maids of honor, who, he declared, were "like witches, who could do hurt, but do no good." There was one, however, the bewitching Throgmorton, who was all goodness: the impassioned knight was resistless; and subsequently the law consecrated what love had already irrevocably joined. But envy with its evil eye was peering. The Queen of Virgins, implacable in love-treasons, sent the lovers to the Tower.

In this desperate predicament, Rawleigh had lost in an hour the proud work of his highest ambition,—the favor of his mistress-sovereign. The forlorn hero had recourse to one of those prompt and petty stratagems in which he was often so dexterous. At his prison-window, one day, he beheld the queen passing in her barge, and suddenly raved like a distracted lover. He entreated to be allowed to go in disguise to rest his eyes once more on the idol of his heart; and, when the governor refused this extraordinary request of a state-prisoner, he, in his agony, struggled. Their daggers were clutched; till Sir Arthur Gorge, seeing "the cold iron walking about," rushed between these terrible combatants. All this, Gorge, then a friend of Rawleigh, minutely narrates in a letter to Cecil; at the same time gently hinting, that, if the minister deem it proper, it may be communicated to the queen, that such was the miserable condition of Rawleigh, that he fell distracted only at the distant sight of her majesty. This theatrical scene was got up for the nonce, and served as a prologue to another characteristic effusion,—a letter of raving gallantry, which Orlando Furioso himself might have penned, potent with the condensed essence of old romance. The amo-

rist in his prison thus sorrows: "I was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus; the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph; sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometime singing like an angel." Sir Walter knew how high the pulse beat of his royal mistress, now aged by her sixtieth year. He obtained his freedom, but was banished the presence. And now, cast out of court favor, and calling himself "the queen's captive," Rawleigh, whom many had feared, and few had not admired, found that even fools had the courage to vex a banished favorite.

There was no hope; yet Rawleigh, in his exile at his own Sherborne, addressed more than one letter to the queen, warning her of "the dangers of a Spanish faction in Scotland." But the letters were received in silence. Rawleigh then attempted to awaken Cecil to the state of Ireland, then on the point of exploding into a rebellion. He compares himself to the Trojan soothsayer, "who cast his spear against the wooden horse, and was not believed." The language of complaint was not long tolerable to a spirit which would have commanded the world; and at once he took his flight from the old to the new, and his fleet and himself were again buoyant on the ocean.

This was Rawleigh's first voyage to "the empire of Guiana," as it was then called. His interesting narrative Hume has harshly condemned, as containing "the most palpable lies ever imposed on the credulity of mankind." Our romantic adventurer has incurred censure for his own credulity in search of mines which appear to have existed, and of "the golden city," which lying Spaniards had described; and he had even his honor impeached by the baffled speculators of his own day, whom he had beguiled with his dreams: but he who sacrificed life and fortune in a great enterprise left the world a pledge that he at least believed in his own tale.

Rawleigh, like other men of genius, was influenced by the spirit of the age, which was the spirit of discovery; and, to the brave and the resolved, what could be impracticable which opened a new world? The traditions of the Spaniards had been solemnly recorded in the collections of their voyages, and had been sanctioned by the reports of Rawleigh's own people: and he himself had fed his eyes and his dreams on the novel aspect of those fertile plains and branching rivers, inhabited by fifty nations; on animals of a new form, and birds of a new plumage; and on a vegetable world of trees and plants and flowers and fruits, on which the eye dwelt for the first time, — a fresh creation, "the face of whose earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance."

The origin of those puerile tales which the Europeans brought home with them has not been traced. Some have the air of religious legends, descriptive of the Paradise of the Blacks; such as that chimerical Manoa, where, they said, "the king had golden images of every object on earth." Or were such marvellous fictions the shrewd inventions of these children of Nature, more cunning than the men of Europe, stupefied and credulous from their sovereign passion? When the Indians on the coast found that the whites seemed insatiate of gold and pearls, they fostered the madness, directing their strange invaders far up into the land, — to the great city of Manoa, the El Dorado of the Spaniards, and which no one ever reached. In this manner, they probably designed to rid themselves of their ambiguous guests; sending them to stray in the deserts of primeval forests, or to sail along interminable rivers, wrecked amid rapid falls.

Rawleigh endured many miseries; and, on his return, his narrative was deemed fabulous. The pathos of his language, however, perpetuates his dignified affliction: "Of the little remaining fortune I had, I have wasted in effect all herein. I have undergone many constructions, been accompanied with

many sorrows, with labor, hunger, heat, sickness, and peril. From myself I have deserved no thanks; for I am returned a beggar, and withered."

An enterprise which was, as he himself considered it to be, national, crushed the resources of the individual. He assures us that he might have enriched himself, had "it become the former fortune in which he once lived, and sorted with all the offices of honor, which by her majesty's grace he held that day in England, for him *to go journeys of picory;*" that is, in Gondomar's plain Spanish, "piracy:" for the Spaniards applied the term *picarro*, a rogue or thief, to every one sailing in their forbidden seas. The dedication of his narrative, though directed to Howard and Cecil, was evidently addressed to "the lady of ladies," who, however, could not break her enchanted silence.

Spain trembled at the efforts of a single hero of England: she seemed to anticipate her uncertain dominion over that new world. Spain, though proud and mighty, standing on her golden feet, yet found them weak as unbaked clay, while her treasure-fleets were either burned or sunk, or carried into our ports. But at home there were those who dreaded the ascendency of that bold spirit, which, even in his present sad condition, asserted that "there were men worthy to be kings of these dominions, and who, by the queen's grace and leave, would undertake it of themselves." His adversaries would cloak their private envy under the fair color of the public safety, or seemed wise with prudential scepticism. Yet the dauntless soul of Rawleigh, amid his distresses, despatched two ships, under his devoted Keymis, to keep up the intercourse with the weak colony he had left behind: this was the second voyage to Guiana, which only increased the anxiety for a third, which soon followed.

It is a curious instance of that alarm of jealousy prevalent with the favorites of those days, that, during the time of Rawleigh's disgrace at court, merely his sudden appearance in the

metropolis, as the news is cautiously indicated, "gave cause of discontent to some other;" that is, the reigning favorite, Essex. Possibly there might be some cause; for the writer tells that Rawleigh was "in good hope to return into grace:"* but this restorative was not then administered to the lorn stroller from Sherborne. The queen was imperturbable.

The royal anger of Elizabeth never interfered with her policy, nor dulled her sagacity. Two years after, in 1596, it was decided to attack the Spanish fleet in their own harbors, according to a plan laid down by Rawleigh as far back as in 1588. He was now wanted; and therefore he was remembered as far as his appointment, to be one of the four commanders in the famous expedition against Cadiz. Essex, as commander-in-chief, betrayed his incompetence; and Rawleigh, the prompt energy of his military and his maritime abilities. Essex, at all times his rival, and never his friend, saw his own lustre dusked by the eminence of his inferior; and, on his return, fatally read in the eyes of his royal mistress the first omen of his decline. During his absence, his recommendation of Sir Thomas Bodley for the secretaryship of state had been rejected, and the hated Cecil had triumphed. Rawleigh now undertook a more difficult affair than the victory of Cadiz, — he effected an amicable arrangement between Cecil and Essex: and this seems to have been a most grateful service to the queen; for, a month afterwards, we find him again at court. Five years must have elapsed, — so long the queen could preserve the royalty of her anger.

Restored to the queen's favor, the lover had lost nothing of his fascination. The very day on which Cecil led Rawleigh in "as captain of the guard," he rode in the evening with the queen, and held a private conference, where probably many secrets and counsels were divulged, too long and too proudly suppressed.† All this was done in the absence of Essex, but

* Lodge's "Illustrations of British History," iii. 67.

† Sidney Letters, ii. 45.

not without his consent; for the three enemies were now to be friends.

The second great expedition followed. Again Essex betrayed his inexperience and his failure; while Rawleigh, in a brilliant action, took Fayal. The reception of Essex at court levelled his ambition; and he retreated from the queen's reproaches, sick at heart, to bury himself in sullen seclusion. The remainder of his days exhibits a series of disturbed acts, in the continued conflict between his own popularity and the variable favor of the queen. To complete this tale of political intrigues, we have a letter, remarkable for its style, its matter, and its object, from Rawleigh to Cecil, urging the annihilation of "the tyrant," before "it is too late," in terms hardly ambiguous enough to save Rawleigh from the charge of having hurried on the fate of Essex, at whose execution he shed tears;* and in the confession of one of Essex's desperate advisers, in their mad rising, we learn that the earl had fixed on Rawleigh to be got rid of.

If we reflect a moment on this triumvirate of political friends, — and Cecil secretly assured the Scottish monarch that "he and they would never live under one apple-tree," — we may see how the wiles and jealousies of love are not more fatal than those of intriguing statesmen. Rawleigh, for a purpose, reconciles Essex with Cecil; but, in reality, the three

* When Rawleigh was himself in the place where he had put Essex, — on the scaffold, — he solemnly declared that "he had no hand in his blood, and was none of them that procured his death." How are we to reconcile this declaration with the extraordinary letter which first appeared in Murdin's Collection, and which, Hume asserts, "contains the strongest words to the contrary?" Mr. Lodge understands the advice of Rawleigh in the very worst sense: Mr. Tytler, with ingenuity, suggests that Cecil, with "a prospective wariness, which — not satisfied with deceiving his contemporaries — provided *blinds for posterity*," procured Rawleigh to address this letter to him; and, in a word, that, in composing this energetic epistle, he was not so much the writer as the agent in the plot. I am more disposed to believe, that, when Rawleigh wrote so remarkable a letter, he was fully aware of its import, and looked forwards to the result.

alike bear a mutual antipathy. When Essex in disgrace lay sick at home, and the queen, half-repentant in her severity, sent a friendly message to the earl, this appearance of returning favor towards Essex startled Rawleigh, who is seized with sickness in his turn; and the queen, at once the royal slave and mistress of her court-lovers, is compelled to send him a cordial of an equivalent kindness; and both these political patients were cured by the same prescription.

Cecil and Rawleigh paused not till they laid the head of Essex on the block; and that day sealed their own fortunes; for, left without a rival, they became rivals to each other. "Those," said Rawleigh on the scaffold, "who set me against him, set themselves afterwards against me, and were my greatest enemies." This may be placed among the confessions of criminal friendships!

Cecil "bore no love to Rawleigh," tells a contemporary; but we know more than contemporaries, and we possess secrets which Rawleigh could not discover while Elizabeth was on the throne, though a lurking suspicion of the hollowness of his friend "Robin" may have lain on his mind when he wrote this verse on the ambidextrous Talleyrand, who through all changes —

"Still kept on the mountain, and left us on the plain."

It was while this subdolous minister was holding most intimate intercourse with Rawleigh, while his son was placed under his guardian care at Sherborne, and he himself, with Lord Cobham, his brother-in-law, was there a guest, that this extraordinary Machiavel was daily working at the destruction of both his friends! This was effectually done by instilling into the Scottish monarch antipathies never to be uprooted. On the demise of the queen, Rawleigh was for raising up an English against a Scottish party: he was for keeping the government in their own hands; and looking on the successor to the English throne as a foreigner, and his people as a needy

race, would have only admitted him on terms; or, as Aubrey hints, was for "setting up a commonwealth." Little dreamed Rawleigh that he was already sold, and disposed of; that his friend, Secretary Cecil, was surrounding Durham House, Rawleigh's town residence, by domestic and midnight spies; and, as the secretary was wont, laying traps to decoy his associate in the councils of Elizabeth into something which might be shifted into a semblance of treason against the future sovereign.*

The train so covertly laid, the mine was sprung at the due hour. Rawleigh's reception by the king was the prognostic of his fall. Rawleigh announced, James exclaimed, *more suo*, "Rawleigh, Rawleigh! o' my saul, mon, I have heard *rawly* of thee!"† Cecil, who had participated in the fall of Essex, the chief of the Scottish party, all expected would have shared in the same royal repulse. Lady Kildare once aptly described Cecil, when she threatened "to break the neck of that weasel;" and afterwards the Scottish monarch, admiring the quick shiftings and keen scent of the crafty creature in the playful style of the huntsman, characterized his minister, in his kennel of courtiers, as his "little beagle." "The weasel" had all along, moving to and fro, kept his unobserved course; and, to the admiration of all, now "came out of the chamber like a giant, to run his race for honor and fortune." That astute Machiavel had long prepared stanch friends for himself in well-paid Scots. James was hardly seated on his new throne, when his minister opened one of his political exhibitions by the incomprehensible Cobham conspiracy; and this ingenious artificer of state-plots had knotted the present with one apparently more real: but, though they would not

* The extraordinary means of the duplicity of this wily minister are stated by Mr. TYTLER, in the Appendix to his "Life of Rawleigh."

† As *Rawleigh*, like all his contemporaries, including Shakespeare, wrote his name diversely, so that we are at a loss to pronounce it, this spontaneous sally of the Scottish monarch reveals its real pronunciation; which is also confirmed by a sort of epigram of that day.

hold together, they served to put his friend on his memorable trial. When the eloquence of Rawleigh had baffled his judges, and the evidence failed, Cecil, then sitting in court in the character of a friend, secretly conveyed an insidious letter, sufficient to serve as an ambiguous plea for a mysterious conviction. Rawleigh was judicially but illegally condemned; and the affair terminated in a burlesque execution, where men were led to the block, and no one suffered decapitation.*

A remarkable circumstance, however, occurred, which must not be passed over in this psychological history of Rawleigh. In the Tower, during the examination of the weak and worthless Cobham, who was shifting evidence, Rawleigh affected a recklessness of life; suddenly he inflicted upon himself what his enemies afterwards called "the guilty blow in the Tower:" in the blow he did not risk his life; "being, in truth, rather a cut than a stab" in his breast. Mortified passion may have overcome for a moment the hero whose fortitude had often been more nobly tried; but, in my own mind, I cannot avoid including the present incident among those similar minor artifices designed for some grand effect.

Rawleigh, condemned, was suffered to live twelve years in the Tower; whence he obtained a release, but not a pardon:

* The secret history of this state-riddle, — the conspiracy of Cobham, a disappointed courtier, — as Mr. Lodge observes, might fill a moderate volume of speculations on its darker parts. All historians agree that it must remain insolvable and "hopelessly obscure." It is, however, opened with great vigor, and novelty of research, by Mr. TYTLER, in the Appendix to his biography of Rawleigh. But he passes over too slightly the conversation and the offer of the "eight thousand crowns;" and "the pension," of which Rawleigh said "he would tell him more when he saw the money." It is quite evident that Rawleigh had been tampered with by the silly Cobham, whose rickety brains had been concocting a crude, fantastic plot, which was hardly the initial of one. But Rawleigh had listened: he had not positively refused his participation, neither had he yielded his consent. When "the eight thousand crowns" had safely arrived, where were they to go? Rawleigh declared, that, "when he saw the money, he would be ready to talk more on the subject." Mr. Tytler, like Sir Walter, is pleased to consider that the whole affair was "one of Lord Cobham's idle conceits."

the condemnation was suspended over his head like the pointed sword, ready to drop on the guest invited to the mockery of a festival. A new secretary, Winwood, and a new favorite, Buckingham, had listened to the vision of a gold mine and an English colony. The sage, who had passed through that school of wisdom, his own "History of the World," when called into action, was still the same romantic adventurer. What else for him remained in England but the dream of his early days? The military and the naval writings, as well as the "History of the World," of Rawleigh, had been designed by their great author to mould the genius of that prince to whom he looked for another Elizabethan reign; but Prince Henry had sunk into an untimely grave, and the sovereign who loved as much as any one an awful volume was deterred from valuing the man.

Rawleigh gathered together all the wrecks of his battered fortune, and, with a company of adventurers, equipped the fleet which was hastening to found a new empire. Ere its sails were filled with propitious gales, its ruin was prepared. The secret plans of its great conductor, confided to our government, by their order were betrayed to the jealous council of Castile. Lying in sickness, Rawleigh lands on a hostile coast: his son, with filial emulation, combated and fell; his confidential Keymis, whose life was devoted to him, could not endure reproach, and, closing his cabin-door, ended his days; and, if he himself bore up with life, it was that his life was still due to many. "I could die heart-broken, as Drake and Hawkins had died before, when they failed in their enterprise. My brains are broken, and I cannot write much: I live, and I told you why." But he knew his life was a pledge no longer redeemable. His "rabble of idle rascals" mutinied, till the hope of falling in with the Spanish treasure-fleet lured them homewards. The letters to his wife are among the most tragical communications of a great mind greatly despairing, and may still draw tears.

On Rawleigh's return, a proclamation was issued for his arrest; and he surrendered to his near kinsman, Sir Lewis Stukeley, Vice-Admiral of Devon. On their journey to London, they were joined by Manoury, a French physician, not unskilled in chemistry, a favorite study with Rawleigh.

It was in this journey that Rawleigh contrived one of those humiliating stratagems which we have several times noted with astonishment. In a confidential intercourse with the French chemist, he procured drugs by which he was enabled to counterfeit a strange malady. Alas! the great man was himself cozened. Manoury was the most guileful of *Moutons;* and his near kinsman, Stukeley, the most infamous of traitors!*

The conflict of opposite emotions which induced this folly who shall describe? Rawleigh died in the elevation of his magnanimous spirit, as truly great when he took his farewell of his world as when he closed the last sublime page of his great volume. He knew his fate, and he had come to meet it. The moment was disastrous: the Spanish match lay in one scale, and the head of Rawleigh was put in the other by the implacable Spaniard; and, when a state-victim is required, the political balance is rarely regulated by simple justice.

An eminent critic has pronounced, that "the 'History of the World,' by Rawleigh, is rather an historical dissertation than a work rising to the majesty of history."

It sometimes happens that the application of an abstract principle of the critical art to some particular work may tend to injure the writer, without conveying any information to the reader; for thus the rare qualities of originality are wholly passed by, should the masterly genius have composed in a manner unprescribed by any canon of criticism.

* This incident in the life of Rawleigh is told in the "Curiosities of Literature," vol. iii. I have been enabled to give the secret history of this Sir Lewis Stukeley, who having first despoiled, then betrayed, his great kinsman. That history offers one of the most striking instances of moral retribution.

Our author was not ignorant of the laws of historical composition, which, he observes, "many had taught, but no man better, and with greater brevity, than that excellent learned gentleman, Sir FRANCIS BACON."

The ardent and capricious genius of our author projected a universal history which was to occupy three mighty folios, at a time when our language had not yet produced a single historical work: he had no model to look up to; nor, had there been, was he disposed to be casting in other men's moulds. The design and the execution were a creation of his own. Masses of the most curious parts of learning were to be drawn out of recondite tomes, from the Rabbins, the Fathers, the historians, and the poets of every nation; all that the generations of men have thought, and whatever they have memorably acted. But, in this voluminous scroll of time, something was to enter of not less price,—what his own searching spirit thought, what his diligence had collected, and, farther, what his own eyes had observed in the old and the new worlds. TRUTH and EXPERIENCE were to be the columns which supported and adorned HISTORY; and this we read in "the MIND of the Frontispiece,"—one of those emblematical representations of "the mind" of the author, which the engravers of that day usually rendered less pictorial than perplexing.*

A universal genius was best able to compose a universal history: statesman, soldier, and sage, in writing the "History of the World," how often has Rawleigh become his own historiographer! He had been a pilgrim in many characters, and his philosophy had been exercised in very opposite spheres of human existence. A great commander by land and by sea, he was critical in all the arts of stratography, and delights to illustrate them on every occasion. The danger of

* The explanatory stanzas prefixed to this "Mind," though unauthorised by the name of the writer, were composed by Jonson; for they appear in his works.

having two generals for one army is exemplified by what he himself had witnessed at Jarnac: in a narrative of Carthage, when the Romans lost their fleet, he points out the advantages of a flying navy, from what had occurred under his own eye in the wars of the Netherlands and of Portugal; and concludes that "it is more difficult to defend a coast than to invade it." In the midst of a narrative of the siege of a town of Carthage, when the besiegéd rushed out of the town eager to learn the terms of the capitulation before they were concluded, the Roman general seized on this advantage by entering with his army, without concluding the capitulation. "A similar incident happened, when I was a young man in France, of Marshal Monluc, while a parley was held about the surrender; but noble men held this conduct as not honorable." Foreign mercenaries, he observes, are not to be relied on; for, at the greatest extremity, they have not only refused to fight, but have passed over to the enemy; or they have become the masters of those who hired them, as the Turks were called in by the Greeks, and the Saxons by the Britons. And here he distinguishes the soldiery consisting of English, French, and Scotch, which established the independence of the Netherlands: in this case, these mercenaries were bound together by one common interest with the people who had required their aid; therefore these stood in the condition of allies, as well as of foreigners solely retained by pay.

His digressions are never more agreeable than when they become dissertations: the most ordinary events of history assumed a new face by the noble speculations which he builds on them, full of a searching, critical spirit, of sound morality, and of practicable policy; often profound, always eloquent. One on the Mosaic code as a precedent for the laws of other nations would have delighted Montesquieu. On the inviolability of oaths, he admirably describes them as "the chains by which freemen are tied to the world." On slavery, on idolatry, on giving the lie, on the point of honor, on the

origin of local names of America by their first discoverers, — such topics abound in his versatile pages. Even curious matters engaged his attention, and in the new world he inspected Nature with the close eye of a naturalist;* nor has he disdained, at times, a pleasant tale. There are few pages of this venerable but genial volume where we do not find that it is Rawleigh who speaks or who acts, making legible his secret thoughts, charming the story of four thousand years with the pleasures of his own memory.

The actual condition of society; the politics of past governments; the arts, the trades, the inventions of past ages, matters deeply interesting in the history of man, often forgotten, and hardly recoverable, — judged by that large mind which had so boldly planned the "History of the World," cannot properly be censured as "digressions." "True it is," he adds, "that I have also made many others, which, if they shall be laid to my charge, I must cast the fault into the great heap of human error. For, seeing we digress in all the ways of our lives; yea, seeing the life of man is nothing else but digression, — it may the better be excused in writing of their lives and actions. *I am not altogether ignorant in the laws of history and of the kinds.*"

It is evident that our author was conscious that he had struck into a virgin vein; and, however amenable to the code of historical composition, very gracefully apologizes for indulging the novelty. The novelty, indeed, was so little comprehended by those gross feeders on the carrion of time, who can discover nothing in history but its disjointed and naked facts, that, rejecting every "digression" as interrupting the chro-

* Rawleigh notices a singular instinct in the birds in these new regions, which built their nests on the twigs of trees, pendent over the waters, rather than in the branches, to save their young from the attacks of the monkeys. In such relations he is full and particular. He corrects the marvellous accounts of the *Ficus indica*, — the banian, or sacred tree of the Brahmins: we nowhere find such a lively picture of that singular curiosity of Nature, the self-planting tree, here minutely described.

nology, they put forth their abridgments: and Alexander Ross rejoiced to call his "the Marrow of History;" but probably found, to his dismay, that he had only collected the dry bones; and that, in all this "History of the World," nothing was more veritable than the author's own emotions. All which these matter-of-fact retailers had so carefully omitted, we now class by a title which such writers rarely recognize as the philosophy of history. Great writers admit of no abridgment. If you do not follow the writer through all the ramifications of his ideas, and imbue your mind with the fulness of the author's mind, you can receive only interrupted impressions, and retain but an imperfect and mutilated image of his genius. The happiest of abridgments is the author's own skill in composition: to say all that is necessary, and to omit all that is superfluous, — this is the secret of abridgment; and there is no other of a great original work.

"The History of the World" appeared as a literary phenomenon, even to the philosophical Hume. He expresses his astonishment at "the extensive genius of the man, who, being educated amid naval and military enterprises, had *surpassed in the pursuits of literature even those of the most recluse and sedentary lives.*"

This is much from him who has taught us not to wonder, but to inquire. Rawleigh, however, had dropped some hints on his Hebraic studies: acknowledging his ignorance of that recondite language, he was indebted to some preceding interpreters and to "some learned friends;" and he adds with good humor, but with a solemn feeling, "Yet it were not to be wondered at, had I been beholding to neither; having had *eleven years' leisure* to obtain the knowledge of that or any other language." It did not occur to our historian, that "eleven years" of uninterrupted leisure yields a full amount of "the most recluse and sedentary life." With a universal mind, Rawleigh was eager after universal knowledge; and we have positive and collateral evidence, that he sought in his learned circle

whatever aid the peculiar studies of each individual could afford him.

A circumstance as remarkable as the work itself occurred in the author's long imprisonment. By one of those strange coincidences in human affairs, it happened, that, in the Tower, Rawleigh was surrounded by the highest literary and scientific circle in the nation. Henry, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, on the suspicion of having favored his relative Piercy, the gunpowder-plot conspirator, was cast into this state-prison, and confined during many years. This earl delighted in what Anthony Wood describes as "the obscure parts of learning." He was a magnificent Mecænas, and not only pensioned scientific men, but daily assembled them at his table; and in this intellectual communion, participating in their pursuits, he passed his life. His learned society were designated as "the Atlantes of the mathematical world;" but that world had other inhabitants, — antiquaries and astrologers, chemists and naturalists. There was seen Thomas Allen, another Roger Bacon, "terrible to the vulgar," famed for his "Bibliotheca Alleniana," a rich collection of manuscripts, most of which have been preserved in the Bodleian: the name of Allen survives in the ardent commemorations of Camden, of Spelman, and of Selden. He was accompanied by his friend Dr. Dee; but whether Dee ever tried their patience or their wonder by his "Diary of Conferences with Spirits," we find no record: and by the astronomical Torporley, a disciple of Lucretius, for his philosophy consisted of atoms; several of his manuscripts remain in Sion College. The muster-roll is too long to run over. In this galaxy of the learned, the brightest star was Thomas Hariot, who merited the distinction of being "the universal philosopher:" his inventions in algebra, Descartes, when in England, silently adopted, but which Dr. Wallis afterwards indignantly reclaimed; his skill in interpreting the text of Homer excited the grateful admiration of Chapman, when occupied by his version. Bishop Corbet has described —

"Deep Hariot's mine,
In which there is no dross."

Two others were Walter Warner, who is said to have suggested to Harvey the great discovery of the circulation of the blood; and Robert Hues, famed for his "Treatise on the Globes." These, with Hariot, were the earl's constant companions; and, at a period when science seemed connected with necromancy, the world distinguished the earl and his three friends as "Henry the Wizard, and his three Magi." We may regret that no Symposia have come down to us from this learned society in the Tower, which we may consider as the first philosophical society in our country. All these persons, eminent in their day, appear to have written in their various departments, and were inventors in science; yet few of their works have passed through the press. This circumstance is a curious evidence in our literary history, that, in that day, the studious composed their works without any view to their publicity: the difficulty of obtaining a publisher for any work of science might also have conduced to confine their discoveries to their private circle. Some of these learned men, probably, were uncouth writers: Dee never could end a sentence in his rambling, confused style. Many of these works, scattered in their forlorn state of manuscript, often fell into hands who appropriated them to their own purpose. Even Hariot's treatise, which furnished Descartes with a new idea of the science, was a posthumous publication by his friend Warner, merely to secure a continuance of the pension which had been granted to him by the Earl of Northumberland.

These philosophers appear to have advanced far into their inquiries; for they were branded by atheism or deism. What, therefore, has reached us coming from ignorant or prejudiced reporters, will not satisfy our curiosity. Of Hariot, Wood tells that "he always undervalued the old story of the creation of the world, and could never believe the trite position, *ex nihilo nihil fit.* He made a *philosophical theology,* wherein

he cast off the Old Testament; so that, consequently, the New would have no foundation. He was a deist, and his doctrine he did impart to the Earl of Northumberland and to Sir Walter Rawleigh, when he was compiling his 'History of the World.' He would controvert the matter with eminent divines; who therefore, having no good opinion of him, did look on the matter of his death as a judgment for nullifying the Scriptures." Hariot died of a cancer on his lip.

From such accounts we can derive no knowledge of the *philosophical theology* of Hariot. He was the philosopher, however, who went to Virginia with the design of establishing a people of peace, with the Bible in his hand. He taught those children of Nature its pure doctrines, till they began to idolize the book itself, embracing it, kneeling to it, and rubbing their bodies with it. This new Manco Capac checked this innocent idolatry, but probably found some difficulty in making them rightly comprehend that the Bible was but a book like any other, made by many hands; but that the spiritual doctrine contained in it was a thing not to be touched nor seen, but to be obeyed. Such a philosopher, could he have remained among these Indians, would have become the great legislator of a tribe of primitive Christians; and, as he actually contrived to construct an alphabet for them, this seems to have been his intention.

The doctrines of Hariot, which Wood has reprobated, certainly were not infused into the pages of Rawleigh: his divinity is never sceptical; his researches only lead to speculations purely ethical and political, — what men have done, and what men do.*

* The authors of the "General Dictionary" censure Wood for his unauthenticated assertions; and they infer, that, as he was thus evidently erroneous in his notion of Rawleigh's history, he may have been equally so in his idea of the philosophical theology of Hariot. Wood, however, could have alleged his authority, though a very indifferent one. We have recently discovered that Wood here was only transcribing the crude hearsays of his friend Aubrey; and, in these matters, the Oxford antiquary, and the

Such were the men of science, daily guests in the Tower during the imprisonment of Rawleigh; and, when he had constructed his laboratory to pursue his chemical experiments, he must have multiplied their wonders. With one he had been intimately connected early in life: Hariot had been his mathematical tutor, was domesticated in his house, and became his confidential agent in the expedition to Virginia. Rawleigh had earnestly recommended his friend to the Earl of Northumberland; and Sion House, in consequence, became for Hariot a home and an observatory.

The scholastic Dr. Burhill is supposed to have been one among the learned friends whose assistance in his Hebraic researches Rawleigh acknowledges. It was such a student that might have led Rawleigh into his singular discussion on the site of paradise. One great name has claimed the tracings of his hand in the "History of the World." Ben Jonson has positively told that he wrote a piece on the Punic wars, which Rawleigh "altered, and set in his book." The verses prefixed to the "Mind of the Frontispiece" are Jonson's. There was an intimacy between Jonson and Rawleigh which appears to have been interrupted; and this may possibly have given occasion to the remarkable sharp stricture from Jonson, in his conversation with Drummond, that "Rawleigh esteemed more fame than conscience: the best wits in England were employed in making his 'History of the World.'"

Rawleigh, in his vast and recondite collection of criticism and chronology, would enrich his volume with the stores accumulated from the sources of brother-minds: it is even said that he submitted his composition to Serjeant Hoskyns, that universal Aristarchus of that day, at whose feet, to use the style of honest Anthony, all poets threw their verses;* but

"magotie-headed" gossiper, as Wood afterwards found him to be, were equally intelligent.

* Hoskyns wrote many poems. A manuscript volume of his poems, fairly written, we may presume, for the press, and "bigger than all Donne's

the most material characteristic of his work Rawleigh could borrow from no one, — the tone and elevation of his genius.

But, if the "History of the World" instructed his contemporaries, there was a greater history in his mind, which had secured the universal acceptance of posterity, — the history of his own times. But the age of Elizabeth, in manuscript, might be an act of treason in the court of James the First, in the eyes of his redoubted rival, Cecil: he who did not wholly escape from malicious applications in writing the history of the world that had passed away, eluded the fatal struggle with contemporary passions. He has himself acquainted us of this loss to our domestic political history: "It will be said by many that I might have been more pleasing to the reader if I had written the story of mine own times, having been permitted to draw water as near the well-head as another. To this I answer, that whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth. There is no mistress or guide that hath led her followers and servants into greater miseries. He that goeth after her too far off, loseth her sight, and loseth himself; and he that walks after her at a middle distance, I know not whether I should call that kind of course temper or baseness." *

The miscellaneous writings of Rawleigh are so numerous

works," was "lent by his son Sir Benedict," A. Wood tells us, "who was a man that ran with the usurping Parliament, to a certain person, in 1653; but he could never retrieve it." We are left in the dark to know whether we have lost a great poet, or only a loyalist; whether the "certain person" was a parliamentary *enragé*, or only utterly reckless of a collection of poems "bigger than Dr. Donne's"! One poem of this great critic has come down to us, of which there is more than one manuscript in the Museum, and one in the Ashmolean, — "A Vision," addressed to the king during his confinement, in which he introduces his mother and his wife and his child. By the frequency of these copies, we find how much temporary passion gave an interest to very indifferent writings. It is printed by Dr. Bliss in the "Athenæ Oxonienses."

* Preface to the "History of the World."

and so various, that Oldys has classed them under the heads, poetical, epistolary, military, maritime, geographical, political, philosophical, and historical.*

Of a character so exalted and a genius so varied, how has it happened that Gibbon, who had once intended to compose the wondrous tale of his life, has pronounced his character to be "ambiguous," and that Hume has described it as "a great but ill-regulated mind"?†

The story of Rawleigh is a moral phenomenon; but what is there that moves in the sphere of humanity, of which, when we discover the principle of action, we cannot calculate even the most eccentric movements? Rawleigh from the first was to be the architect of his own fortunes: this was a calamity with him; for a perpetual impulse was communicated to the versatility and the boundless capacity of a genius which seemed universal. Soldier and sailor, sage and statesman, he could not escape from the common fate of becoming the

* The name of Rawleigh proved too attractive for the booksellers to escape their grasp: they have forged his name on various occasions; and they have done worse, for they have unquestionably adulterated his genuine works by admitting writings which he never could have written. Rawleigh composed some "Instructions to his Son and to Posterity." The publisher of his "Remains" probably considered that "the Dutiful Advice of a Loving Son to his Aged Father" must be equally acceptable. Sir Walter had no aged father to address; and, if he had, he would not have written such a mean piece of puritanic insolence. I suspect that "the Advice" was nothing but a parody on "the Instructions" by some very witless scribbler.

† Hume was bitterly attacked in the "Biographia Britannica" by a Dr. Philip Nicoll, one of the writers calling himself one of the proprietors, for his account of the conduct of Rawleigh, — art. "Ralegh," note (cc). The spirit of nationality was rife in 1760, when we find that a cruel apology is inflicted on Hume as "a foreigner! for this writer may be allowed the privilege of that plea, as being born and bred, and constantly living, among a people, and under a constitution, of a very different nature, genius, and temper from the English"! I cannot believe that Hume, to remove the odium of Rawleigh's death from the Scottish monarch, purposely depreciated the hero; but probably looking hastily into the account of Guiana, stuffed with the monstrous tales of a lying Spaniard, and considering the whole to be a gross artifice of the great navigator for an interested purpose, he gave way to his impressions.

creature of circumstance. What vicissitudes! what moral revelations! How he disdained his enviers! His towering ambition paused not in its altitude: he reached its apex; and, having accomplished every thing, he missed all! He whose life is a life of adventure, who is now the daring child of fortune, and falls to be the miserable heir of misfortune, though glory sometimes disguises his recklessness, is doomed to be often humiliated as well as haughty.

The favorite of his sovereign, thrown amid the contending suitors of a female court, we have found creeping in crooked politics, and intriguing in dark labyrinths. Rawleigh met his evil genius in Cecil: he saw his solitary hope vanish with Prince Henry. Awakening his last energies with the juvenile passion of his early days, he pledged his life on a new adventure: it was his destiny to ascend the scaffold. He was always to be a victim of state. The day of his trial and the hour of his death told to his country whom they had lost. From the most unpopular man in England, he became the object of the public sympathy; for they saw the permanent grandeur of the character, when its lustre was no longer dusked by cloudy interests or temporary passions.

There is no object in human pursuits which the genius of Rawleigh did not embrace. What science was that unwearying mind not busied in? What arts of hoar antiquity did he not love to seek? What sense of the beautiful ever passed transiently over his spirit? His books and his pictures ever accompanied him in his voyages. Even in the short hour before his last morning, is he not still before us, while his midnight pen traces his mortuary verse, perpetuating the emotions of the sage, and of the hero who could not fear death?*

* The Dean of Westminster was astonished at Rawleigh's cheerfulness on the day of his execution, who "made no more of his death than if he had been to take a journey." The divine was fearful that this contempt of death might arise from "a senselessness of his own state;" but the hero satisfied

Such is the psychological history of a genius of the first order of minds, whom posterity hails among the founders of our literature.

the dean that he died "very Christianly." Yet the gossip of Aubrey tells, that "his in Whitney said, and I think it is printed, that he spake not one word Christ, but of the great and incomprehensible God with much zeal and adoration, so that he concluded he was an a-Christ, not an a-theist." In this manner, gr ere then judged whenever they "ventured at discourse which o the churchmen," as this confused recorder of curiou lown to us. This indicates that Socinian principles were appearing.

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHER, DR. DEE.

At the dawn of philosophy, its dreams were not yet dispersed, and philosophers were often in peril of being as imaginative as poets. The arid abstractions of the schoolmen were succeeded by the fanciful visions of the occult philosophers; and both were but preludes to the experimental philosophy of Bacon and Newton, and the metaphysics of Locke. The first illegitimate progeny of science were deemed occult, and even magical: while astronomy was bewildered with astrology, chemistry was running into alchemy, and natural philosophy wantoned in the grotesque chimeras of magical phantoms, the philosophers themselves pursued science in a suspicious secrecy, and were often imagined to know much more than the human faculties can acquire. These anagogical children of revery, straying beyond "the visible diurnal sphere," elevated above humanity, found no boundary which they did not pass beyond, no profundity which they did not fathom, no altitude on which they did not rest. The credulity of enthusiasts was kept alive by the devices of artful deceivers, and illusion closed in imposture.

Shakespeare, in the person of Prospero, has exhibited the prevalent notions of the judicial astrologer combined with the adept, whose white magic, as distinguished from the black or demon magic, holds an intercourse with purer spirits. Such a sage was —

> "Transported,
> And rapt in secret studies;"

that is, in the occult sciences; and he had—

"Volumes that he prized more than his dukedom."

These were alchemical, astrological, and cabalistical treatises. The magical part of "the Tempest," Warton has observed, "is founded on that sort of philosophy which was peculiar to JOHN DEE and his associates, and has been called 'the Rosicrucian.'"

Dr. DEE was a Theurgist, a sort of magician, who imagined that they held communication with angelic spirits, of which he has left us a memorable evidence. His personal history may serve as a canvas for the picture of an occult philosopher,—his reveries, his ambition, and his calamity.

Dee was an eminent and singular person, more intimately connected with the patronage of Elizabeth than perhaps has been observed. It was the fate of this scholar to live in the reigns of five of our successive sovereigns, each of whom had some influence on his fortunes. His father, in the household of Henry the Eighth, suffered some "hard-dealing" from this imperious monarch injurious to the inheritance of the son; the harshness of the sire was considered by the royal children, for Edward granted a pension; Mary, in the day of trial, was favorably disposed towards the philosopher; and Elizabeth, a queen well known for her penurious dispensations, at all times promptly supplied the wants of her careless and dreamy sage.

That decision of character which awaits not for any occasion to reveal itself broke forth in his college-days. His skill in mathematics, and his astronomical observations, had attracted general notice; and, in his twentieth year, Dee ventured on the novel enterprise of conferring personally with the learned of the Netherlands. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, little experimental knowledge was to be gathered out of books. Like the ancient, our insular philosophers early travelled to discover those novelties in science which were

often limited to the private circle: there were no Royal or Antiquarian Societies, no "Transactions" of science or the arts. Robert Fludd, the great Rosicrucian, who became more famous than Dee in occult studies, before he gave the world his elaborate labors, passed six years in his travels in France, Germany, and Italy.

Our youthful sage, on his return to his college, presented them with several curious instruments of science, which were not then always procurable in the shops of mechanics. Philosophers often made as well as invented their implements. The learned Mercator was renowned for his globes; and mathematical instruments, of a novel construction, were the invention of the scientific Frisias.

Our young philosopher, already suspected of a dangerous intimacy with the astral influences, did not quiet the murmurs by his improved dexterity in mechanics. In the elation of youth, he astounded the marvelling fellows of his college. Dee has himself confessed that "his boyish attempts and exploits scholastical may not be meet to repeat." In a lecture, Dee executed a piece of mechanical invention which now would have been pantomimical, but was then necromantic. When a greater magician, Roger Bacon, by his art, had made the apparition of a man to walk from the top of All-Hallows steeple in Oxford to the top of St. Mary's, this optical illusion had endangered his life; and another great occult philosopher set forth a compassionate apology for the science of optics, but could only allege it was not magical, though it seemed so. Two centuries and a half had not sufficed to enlighten the fellows of a college at Oxford.

Dee has suffered hard measure from those who have only judged of him in the last days of his unprotected distress. In his age, if we except mathematics, there were few demonstrable truths in science, disguised as it was by rank fables and airy hypotheses: Nature was not interpreted so often as she was misunderstood. The ideal world seemed hardly more

illusive than the material. While his sovereign and the nation and foreigners were looking up to the solitary sage, may we not pardon the honest egotism which once declared, that, if he had found a Mæcenas, Britain would not have been destitute of an Aristotle? BACON had not yet appeared; and, however we may deem of his aspiration, we cannot censure his judgment in discovering there was yet a vacant seat for him who was worthy to fill it.

Dee was an eminent mathematician; but the early bent of his mind was somewhat fanciful: an inextinguishable ambition to fix the admiration of the world worked on a restless temperament and a long vagrant course of life; and his generous impulses burst into the wild exuberances of the reveries of astrology, alchemy, and the cabala.

The restlessness of a mind ever escaping from the bounded present to the indefinite future directed his flight to the University of Louvain: there he attracted a noble crowd from the court of Brussels, whom he charmed like a new oracle of science. Then he rambled to Paris, to lecture on his favorite Euclid, explaining the elements not only mathematically, but by their application to natural philosophy, like another Pythagoras. A professorship was offered him on any terms; and the curious may still decide on his skill by a remarkable English preface, which Dee furnished to the translation of Euclid by Sir Henry Billingsley. Admiration seemed more real to Dee when he attracted it on different spots. Preceded by his reputation, with a name which had received the baptism of fame, he returned homewards, where he had potent friends in Sir John Cheke and in Cecil, and others who had been his auditors or his pupils; and he was pensioned by the youthful Edward.

In the jealous reign of Mary, he gave umbrage by a correspondence with the confidential servants of the Princess Elizabeth; and Dee had now grown into such repute for his occult sciences, that there was little difficulty in accusing him of

practising against the queen by enchantments. Cast into prison, the magician witnessed his "bedfellow," a meek religious man, dragged to the flames; an incident which long after he could not remember without horror. The spirit of the sovereign fails not to betray itself in each succeeding reign. Mary bound men to the stake; Elizabeth sent them forth into new seas and new lands; and the pacific James, turning them into babbling polemics, only shed much human ink. The inquisitors unexpectedly detected no act of treason; but, as possibly he might stand in peril of heresy, they recommended that he should be placed under the surveillance of Bishop Bonner, which probably was a royal protection. It is evident that Mary was as favorably disposed towards the philosopher as were her brother and her sister; and the literary memorial Dee addressed to the queen showed that he had no leisure to become an heresiarch.

Dee proposed "the recovery and preservation of ancient writers and monuments." These had been lamentably dispersed and wasted by the spoilers of the dissolved monasteries. The moment was favorable for the acquisition, not only by obtaining manuscripts, but by procuring transcripts of all which their possessors would not part with. In this memorial, Dee has recorded that Cicero's treatise "De Republica" perished at Canterbury, and it was the single copy which authenticated its existence. With such a collection, he proposed to erect "a library royal," — a future Vatican, or a British Museum! A noble design, when as yet no national institution for general learning existed. This glorious opportunity was lost! Governments rarely comprehend those prescient minds which anticipate wants posterity cannot always supply.

The early intercourse of the Princess Elizabeth with our philosopher suffered no interruption, as we shall have occasion to show, during her protracted reign, notwithstanding the ill fame of his awful skill in the occult sciences. We must throw ourselves into his times to judge of the calamity of

this celebrity. This and the succeeding age were troubled by the faith of omens, meteors, and of "day-fatality," combined with the astral influences, malignant witchcraft, and horrible magic. It was only at the close of the seventeenth century, in 1682, that Bayle ventured anonymously, in his "Thoughts on Comets," cautiously to demonstrate that these fugitive bodies in the heavens had no influence whatever over the cabinets of princes! Our own historian, Arthur Wilson, in describing "a blazing star," opined that it was not sent as "a flambeau," to usher in the funeral of the simple queen of James the First: the Puritan had no notion that heaven would compliment royalty; but he was not the less alarmed for the Protestant interest, as it concerned "the war then breaking out in Bohemia;" and so difficult was it to decide between the two opinions, that Rushworth, who wrote long afterwards, very carefully chronicles both. Such was the philosophy of the Elizabethan age, and truly much later, in France as well as in England.

It was, therefore, in the spirit of the age that the minister of Elizabeth held a formal conference with Dr. Dee, to fix on a fortunate day for the coronation, and which the sage opened to them on "the principles of the most ancient astrologers;" and the Privy Council punctually placed the crown on the head of the Queen of England. Nor was this the only occult lore for which his protection of the queen's safety was earnestly sought. Dee one morning was hastily summoned to prevent a sudden mischief impending over her majesty's person. A great puppet of wax, representing the queen, was discovered lying in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, with a huge pin stuck through its breast. Dee undertook to quiet "Her Majesty and the Lords of the Honorable Privy Council" within a few hours; but first insisted, that, in the solemn disenchantment, Mr. Secretary Wilson should stand beside him to witness that Dee only used "godly means." It is not in our histories of England that we learn the real occasion of the

coronation-day of Elizabeth, nor of the panic of "the Privy Council" on the incident in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; yet such domestic annals of a people enter into the national character, and have sometimes strangely influenced it.*

Though Dee was imbued with the occult sciences of his age, he ardently cultivated arts and literature which would have honored him in the present. He had formed a great library, rich in Irish and Welsh and other ancient manuscripts, which probably no other person then possessed;† an observatory where he watched, to read in the volume of the heavens; a laboratory of chemistry where the furnace rarely ceased; and a collection of philosophical instruments, too many of which were deemed magical. All these attested his energetic pursuits, to the manifold injury of a very moderate fortune, and the carelessness of a life of abstraction and revery.

But his ambition had accomplished its proud object; and, on all public events wherein science was concerned, recourse was had to the sage of Mortlake. Camden refers to Dr. Dee's astronomical observations of a new star which had gradually vanished, though the celestial apparition had spread great fears and doubts; but our philosopher entertained the queen the length of three days with the phenomenon. A more important labor was his reformation of the Gregorian

* About the same time, in 1574, Ruggeiri, a Florentine, was condemned to the galleys for having conspired against the French monarch in favor of the Duke of Alençon, his brother. The act of treason consisted in making an image of wax, the perfect likeness of Charles the Ninth, which had a heart pricked with pins. This was the exact peril into which our English queen had been cast, — probably by some Romanist, who fancied himself, or herself, to be an adept.

† A catalogue of Dr. Dee's library, in his own handwriting, may be found in Harl. MSS., 1879, — four thousand volumes, "abounding with a curious harvest of books illustrative of the occult art," but also containing the ancient classics. He expended on his collections the considerable sum of "thirty hundred pounds," as he tells us; for at that day they counted by "hundreds."

Calendar, which even later mathematicians have deemed correct. The versatility of the pursuits of this scientific man was as remarkable as their ingenuity. In that reign of maritime enterprise, many of our adventurers had taken nominal possession of many new countries, and the queen had expressed a wish to learn their sites. One day, in her garden at Richmond, Dee unrolled to the royal eye a spacious scroll, hydrographical, geographical, and historical, where the rivers were tracked, and the coasts indented, and the authorities of the records inscribed on its page, by which the sovereign founded her title to dominions of which she had not always heard the names.* The genius of Dee was as erratic as the course of life he shortly fell into; but it kept great objects in view; and as he projected a national library under Mary, when literature itself seemed lost, under Elizabeth, when "this incomparable islandish monarchy" was menaced by the foreigner, he investigated "the art of navigation," and proposed "the perpetual guard and service of a petty navy royal, continually to be maintained without the queen's charges or any unpleasant burdens to the Commons." Our inventor was anticipating our future national greatness; and such minds are only comprehended when they can no longer receive our gratitude.

Our author published eight or ten learned works, and left unfinished fifty, some far advanced.†

* These ingenious rolls, or maps, are now deposited among the Cottonian Manuscripts.

† The curious catalogue of both is found in the "Biog. Britannica." Dee would have printed more of his writings; but he found the printers too often adverse to his hopes, as "few men's studies were in such matters employed." One of his manuscripts was so voluminous, containing an account of his "Inventions," being "greater than the English Bible," that it appeared "so dreadful to the printers," that our philosopher postponed its publication to "a sufficient opportunity," which never occurred.

These unfinished writings are scattered in the COTTONIAN and the ASHMOLEAN Collections; for their learned founders anxiously recovered them.

The naval project appears in a singular volume, entitled "General and Rare Memorials pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation, 1577, folio."

The imagination of Dee often predominated over his science: while both were mingling in his intellectual habits, each seemed to him to confirm the other. Prone to the mystical lore of what was termed the occult sciences (which in reality are no sciences at all, since whatever remains occult ceases to be science), Dee lost his better genius.

The mathematician whom the sage Burleigh had valued for his correction of the vulgar calendar must have amazed that statesman by a proposal to search for a mine for the royal service! claiming for his sole remuneration a letter-patent, granting him all *treasure-trove*, as, in the barbarous law-French, is termed all wealth hidden in the earth, which, no claimant appearing, becomes appropriated by the sovereign. The mysterious agency of the *virgula divina*, or the divining-rod, was to open the undiscovered mine, and to detect in its progress, for the use of the bearer, the unsunned gold or silver which some had been foolish enough to inter, and not extract, from the earth.*

The author printed only one hundred copies, which he distributed among confidential friends, patriotically refusing a considerable offer for a copy by a foreign power. This volume is said to be one of the scarcest books in the English language. A copy at the British Museum contains notes in the handwriting of Dee himself, fraught with his usual sorrows: his representation of his affairs is not luminous, and seems written with a dulled spirit, querulous and involved.

* The mystery of the divining-rod is as ancient as the days of Cicero. The German miners introduced its practice among our Cornish miners. Childrey, in his "Britannia Baconiana, or the Natural Rarities of England, Scotland, and Wales," 1661, cautiously describes, as a disciple of Bacon should, its effects on mines of lead in Somersetshire. Boyle and the Royal Society were perplexed by the evidence. We have accounts from some, unimpeachable for integrity, of the agitation of the divining-rod, as authentic and incomprehensible as any recorded of animal magnetism. A few years ago, a learned writer in the "Quarterly Review" surprised us by reviving the phenomenon, in the history of it, as performed by a lady of distinction, in the present day, searching for a spring of water.

Many frauds have succeeded by this pretended rod of divination. The reader may consult Le Brun's "Histoire Critique des Pratiques Superstitieuses" for "La Baguette;" but, above all, a philosophical article by the

The luminous genius who had illustrated the demonstrations of Euclid was penetrating into the arcane caverns of the cabalists; and, in a state of spiritual elevation, fell into many a dreamy trance. The soul of the mystic would have passed into the world of spiritual existences; but he was not yet blessed with theurgic faculties, and patiently awaited for the elect. If Dee had many reveries, he had also many disciples, both of rank and of name. Whatever a mind thus pre-occupied and predisposed earnestly seeks, it usually finds: its own infirm imagination aids the deception of the artful. The elect spirit, long expected, was at last found in the person of Edward Kelley, a young apothecary, but an adept in the secret sciences: his services were engaged at a moderate salary. Kelley had to make his fortune.

This KELLEY, — who afterwards became an English alchemist, renowned among the votaries of the hermetic art, and of whom many a golden legend is recorded, with which I dare not trust the reader, — it appears, once lost his ears at Lancaster for coining; the judges not perhaps distinguishing the

scientific BIOT, in "Biog. Universelle," art. *Ayman Jacques*. [An account of its use at Freiburg in discovering silver mines, and a picture of its form, may be seen in Dr. Brown's "Travels in Germany," 4to, 1677, p. 136.]

The divining-rod consists simply of a hazel-bough forked. The bearer firmly grasps the two pointed ends, holding it before him: it must bend, or become agitated, when it indicates the spot which conceals a spring of water or buried metal. In the hands of a susceptible agent, tremulous nerves, in the solemn operation, would be likely to communicate their irritability to the hazel-bough. But who has enjoyed the magic of the *treasure-trove*? The divining-rod, described as the Mosaical rod, furnishes an incident in "the Antiquary" of Sir Walter Scott, which was probably borrowed from an amusing incident in the Life of Lilly the astrologer; where we discover that David Ramsay, his majesty's clockmaker, having heard of a great treasure in the cloister of Westminster Abbey, came at midnight, accompanied by one of the elect, with the Mosaical rods: "on the west side of the cloister, the hazel-rods turned over another." David Ramsay had brought a great sack to hold the treasure; when suddenly all the demons issued out of their beds in a storm, that "we verily believed the west end of the church would have fallen." The torches were suddenly extinguished, the rods would not move, and they returned home faster than they came.

process by which the alchemist might have transmuted the baser into the precious metal. This neophyte, moreover, was a wizard, an aspirant in more supernatural arts, an incantator, a spirit-seer! Once with impious temerity he had ventured on questioning the dead! This "deed without a name" was actually perpetrated amid the powers of darkness, in the park of Walton-in-the-dale, in the county of Lancaster. A recent corpse was dragged forth from the churchyard: whether the erected spectre made any sign of resuscitation is not recorded, but it probably did; for it spoke! A voice was heard delivering its short but awful responses, sufficient for the evil curiosity of the guardian of a ward, eager to learn the doomsday of that frail mortal's existence.

For this tale our antiquary WEEVER has been quipped by our antiquary ANTHONY À WOOD for his excessive credulity; as if Anthony would infer that he himself was incredulous on all supernatural disclosures! The authority was, however, unquestionable; for it came from the agent himself in this dark work, the opener of the grave, the spectator of the grim vaticinator, the listener to the sepulchral voice. He had often related this violation of "God's acre" to many gentlemen in Lancashire, as well as to the faithful scribe of our "Ancient Funeral Monuments."

Many strange unexplained accounts have come down to us where *voices* have been introduced, and it has been too usual at once to suppose that the attestations were nothing more than what Butler deems "solid lying." Leibnitz, a philosopher who seems to have delighted in the wonderful, gives an account of a dog who spoke different languages; the evidence is undeniable: and certain it is that the docile animal at his master's bidding opened his mouth, and good French or Latin was distinctly heard. When the astrologer Lilly assures us of one of the magical crystal globes or mirrors from whence the spirits absolutely gave responses, he has described their

tones: "They speak, like the Irish, *much in the throat.*" "This, if it proves nothing else, will serve to show that the Irish was the primitive language," sarcastically observes Gifford; but his acumen might have discovered that "it proved" something else, and that Lilly here really delivered a plain truth in this description of the *voices* which gave the responses of the spirits.

The art of the ventriloquist to convey his voice to the place he wills — into the nostrils of a dead man's skull, into the movable lips of a talking dog, or into the invisible spirits of a magical globe — may be easily recognized. Ventriloquism has been oftener practised than has been known to the listeners. Speaking *much in the throat* identifies that factitious voice, which, drawing the air into the lungs, proceeds out of the thorax, and not from a lower region, as the ancient etymology indicated. The Pythonesses of the oracles exercised this faculty, and it was not less skilfully practised by Edward Kelley.

In the theurgic mysteries, Dee would not deviate from what he deemed "the most Christian courses:" fervent orisons and other devotional ceremonies were to hallow the cabalistical invocations,* and the astrological configurations and hieroglyphical cakes of wax, and other magical furniture. Among these was "a showstone," or an angelical mirror, placed on a pedestal.† By patient inspection at certain more blessed hours, the gifted seer could descry the apparitions of spirits moving within its cloudless orb; for at other times less propi-

* Sloane Manuscripts, 3191.

† There can be no doubt of the reality of all these magical apparatus; for we actually possess them. The magical mirror, having lost its theurgic enchantment, finally was placed among the curiosities of the late Earl of Orford. Lysons describes it as a round piece of volcanic glass finely polished: some one calls it Kennel coal. The hieroglyphical cakes of wax were deposited at the British Museum, probably at the time the precious manuscripts of Dee's conferences with "the spirits" were so carefully lodged in the Cottonian Collections.

tious the surface was indistinct, as if a misty curtain hung over it.*

By what natural progress of incidents the bold inventive genius of Kelley worked this fascination on the fatuity of the visionary, might be curious to develop; but he who himself probably had been a dupe was the better adapted to play the impostor. Strange as this incident may appear to us, it was not rare at that day. A communion with invisible spirits entered into the general creed throughout Europe, and crystal or beryl was the magical medium; but, as the gift of *seeing* what was invisible to every one else was reserved for the elect, it was this circumstance which soon led to impostures. Persons even of ordinary rank in life pretended to be what they termed *speculators*, and sometimes women were *speculatrices*. Often by confederacy, and always by a vivacious fancy, these jugglers poured out their several artful revelations. We now may inscribe as an historical fact in the voluminous annals of human folly, from which, however, we have hardly yet wholly escaped, imaginary beings, and incantation of spirits, and all spectral apparitions.

Kelley was now installed into the office of *skryer;* a term apparently of Dee's invention. Listening to the revelations of angelic spirits and to the mysterious secret, the alchemist inflamed the cabalistical faith of the visionary. It is certain that Dee now abandoned his mundane studies, and for many a year, through some thousands of pages, when Kelley was in the act of "skrying," sate beside "the showstone," the eager

* This superstition retains all its freshness in the East. A magician at Cairo recently, —

"Taking in of SHADOWS WITH A GLASS" ("the Alchemist" of Jonson), has, I believe, been recorded by a noble lord; having startled the lookers-on with one shadow, painfully recognized; and another of a great *bibliophile*, who, seen in the glass, walking in a garden with his hands full of books, was supposed to be the worthy Archdeacon Wrangham. I must, however, add, that the same magician showed himself very dull to a dear friend of mine; and that his "speculator," a boy called, apparently accidentally, from the street, only displayed his gift in nonsensical mendacity.

scribe of th se imagined conferences with "the spirits," received, to use his own words, "through the eye and the ear of E. K." Kelley was a person of considerable fancy, which sometimes approached to a poetical imagination: the masquerade of his spiritual beings is remarkable for its fanciful minuteness. Voices were at times audible to Dee; but the terrific noises of supernatural agency which sometimes accompanied the visions have been heard by the poetical ear of Kelley, though assu the shook the doctor. I will give the reader a notion of one se scenes.

E. K., looking into the showstone, said, "I see a garland of white rose-buds about the border of the stone: they be well opened, but not full out."

A. "The great mercies of God be upon us: we beseech him to increase our faith."

E. K. "Amen! But, while I consider these buds better, they seem rather to be white lilies."

A. "The eternal God wipe away our blackness, and make us purer and whiter than snow."

E. K. "They are seventy-two in number (angels), seeming with their heads *alternatim;* seeming with their heads one towards me, and one towards you. A voice cometh shouting out from the lilies, and all the lilies are become on fire. I hear a sound as though it were of many waters poured or streaming down in the clefts of great rocks and mountains. The noise is marvellous great: I hear it as afar off, and through the stone, or as it were of a thousand watermills going together."

A Voice. "*Est. Et quo modo est?*"

Another Voice. "*Male et in summo: et mensuratum est.*"

E. K. "I hear a great roaring, as if it were out of a cloud over one's head, not perfectly like thunder."

Another Voice. "*The seal is broken!*"

E. K. "Now I see beyond like a furnace-mouth as big as four or five gates of a city, as if it were a quarter of a mile off,

with a horrible smother of smoke coming out of it; and by it a great lake of pitch, and it bubbleth or simpereth as water doth when it beginneth to seethe. There standeth by the pit a white man in a white garment tucked up; his face is marvellous fair: this white spiritual creature saith, 'My lord, *ascend!*'"

E. K. "Now there cometh out a thing like a lion in the hinder parts, and his fore parts hath many heads of divers fashions upon one trunk; he hath like feathers on his neck; his heads are seven, three on one side, and three on another, and one in the middle, longer than the rest, lying backward to his tailward. The white man giveth him a bloody sword, and he taketh it in his fore-foot. The white man tieth this monster's fore-legs with a chain, that he cannot go but as one shackled. Now he giveth the monster a great hammer, with a seal at that end where the hammer striketh. The white man has cried with a loud cry, 'A horrible and terrible beast!' The white man taketh the hammer, and striketh him in the forehead of that head which is in the middle. Now all this vision is vanished away: the stone is clear."

On another occasion E. K. says, "I hear a marvellous noise, as of many mountains: which of the mouths do speak, I cannot discern. I hear a greater noise still: I never heard any such noise; it is as if half the world were rushing down a hill." *

* In the golden days of animal magnetism, more than forty years ago, I heard many tales, and visited many scenes, where there must have been much imposture practised, more credulity contagious, and much which I never could comprehend. In the magnetic sleep, where the body seemed extinct; and in the luminous crisis, where the soul was wakeful in all its inviaible operations,—the inspired communicant, undisturbed by the sly contrivances of the unbeliever, seemed transported when and where they listed. A Mr. Baldwin, in 1795 our consul at Alexandria, in search of what he called the Divinity of Truth, imagined he had found it in this new and mystical science. Always seeking for fitting subjects, a cunning Arab long served his purpose on ordinary matters; but it was his fortune to fall on an Italian wanderer far more susceptible of the magnetic influence. For three years,

During two years, in which Dee deserted his studies and sacrificed his fortune, the name of Dee still remained so eminent, that learned foreigners in their visits to England continued their inquiries after him. A polish prince, Albert a'Laski, who was received with high honors at our court, applied to the Earl of Leicester for an introduction to the great English philosopher; and the earl appointed a day to dine with Dr. Dee. Then it was that our philosopher disclosed his mortifying condition, that he could no longer entertain his noble guests without selling his plate. The queen instantly sent him forty angels in gold. The illustrious Polander became a constant visitor; was initiated into the theurgic mysteries: there came a whisper from the unseen "spirits" that this palatine of Siradia might yet be the elected King of Poland! Ambitious princes are as credulous as ambitious philosophers. The predictors of a crown, with a royal exchequer from the alchemists, seduced the imagination; and a'Laski invited the sages with their families to reside at his castle.

There the Polish lord seems to have wearied of the angelic communications: he transferred them to the emperor, Rodolph the Second, at Prague. In all the courts of Europe, occult philosophers found a ready admittance.

Dee came auspiciously recommended to the emperor; for our author had formerly dedicated to the emperor's father, Maximilian, his cabalistical volume, which, when admitted to a private interview with Rodolph, the sage beheld lying

in his own abode, he has chronicled down "the sittings," as he calls them, where, in the magnetic sleep, the communicant poured forth, in verse and prose, mysteries and revelations. On his return to England, Mr. Baldwin printed by Bulmer, in an unpublished quarto, these "sittings," in the native language of the inspired: as the subject was an improvisator, it probably cost him little to charm Mr. Baldwin in "celestial colloquy sublime" with answers to most unanswerable inquiries, and descriptions of ecstatic scenes which made the pen tremble with wonder and delight in the hands of the infatuated scribe. Baldwin, with the faith of Dee, wrote down the revelations of *his* Edward Kelley.

open on the table.* The introduction of an author to an emperor by his own work may have something really magical in its effect, provided the spell is not disturbed by him who raised it. In an inflated oration, Dee announcing himself like a babbling missionary, as a messenger from angels, the emperor curtly observed that he did not understand Latin! The Pope's nuncio opportunely demanded that the two English necromancers should be questioned at Rome. Their flight relieved the emperor. A Bohemian count rejoiced to receive the fugitives at his Castle of Trebona, where strange alchemical projections of pewter flagons turned into silver, which the goldsmiths of Prague bought, are attested solemnly by Arthur Dee, the son of the doctor, to the philosophical Sir Thomas Browne. This must have been that day of elation which Dee entered in his diary: "Master Edward Kelley did open the great secret to me. God be thanked!" This Arthur Dee, indeed, remained an inveterate alchemist all his life; but the man who in his medical character was recommended by James the First to the Czar of Russia, and, after several years' residence at Moscow, on his return home was appointed physician to Charles the First, would be a reputable witness in any court of law.†

Dee and Kelley were abroad, living together, from 1583 to

* This volume is Dee's "Monas Hieroglyphica, Mathematice, Cabalistice, et Anagogice Explicata," 1564; a book which Elizabeth lamented she could not comprehend. It is reprinted in the "Theatrum Chymicum Britannicum" of that lover of the occult sciences, ELIAS ASHMOLE.

† The often-repeated tales of this vanished alchemy may startle the incredulous; but the dupes and the knaves have been so numerous, that we cannot distinguish between them. Sir Humphry Davy assured me that making gold might be no impossible thing, though, publicly divulged, a very useless discovery. Metals seem to be composite bodies, which Nature is perpetually preparing; and it may be reserved for the future researches in science to trace, and perhaps to imitate, some of these curious operations. Dr. Girtanner of Gottingen predicted, not many years ago, that, "in the nineteenth century, the transmutation of metals would be generally practised:" a set of kitchen utensils in gold, he assures us, would save us from the deathly oxides of copper, &c.

1589. Their adventures would form a romance; but I am not writing one. Their condition was mysterious, as were the incidents of their lives. Sometimes reduced to the most pitiable necessities for "meat and drink," at other times we find Dee travelling with a princely equipage, in three family coaches, a train of wagons, and an escort of fifty horsemen. These extraordinary personag attracted the wonder of the Continent; but, whatever ned, their fortunes were variable. The pride of Dee sitive: there are querulous entries in his diary. Th eared some false play in his dangerous coadjutor. Kelle dropping hints that he lived in a miserable state of del —preludes to the great rupture! Mephistopheles menace is victim. It is evident that Kelley determined to break e profitless partnership, and set up for himself. The pri e parties raised in their quarrels on the Continent i Elizabeth to command their return.* The alchemist did not return home with Dee. He obtained the patronage of the emperor, and was created a knight; but, as usually happened with great alchemists, Sir Edward Kelley was twice cast into prison. Sir Edward, however, continued his correspondence with Dee, and sent her majesty a timely information of some design against her person. This adventurer may appear a very suspicious personage. Lord Burleigh addresses this "Baron of Bohemia," as the minister designates him, with high respect and admiration for his "virtues, his wisdom, and learning." However, in the same confidential letter, his lordship informs "the good knight" of some malicious reports; that "he did not come home, because he could not perform that, indeed, which has been reported of him:" and others had gone so far as to deem Sir Edward "an impostor." This letter, written by Burleigh's

* Harl. Manuscripts, 6986 (26),—a letter from Dr. Dee to the queen, congratulating her on the defeat of the Armada. He declares that he is ready with Kelley, and their families, to return home. Dated November, 1588.

own hand,* shows the skilful falconer luring the bird. Dee assured the queen, that "the Baron of Bohemia" positively possessed the secret of the great operation. The queen anxiously concerted measures to secure the escape of Sir Edward Kelley from his second imprisonment. Agents were despatched, the jailers were drugged, the horses were awaiting for the fugitive: scaling the wall, he fell, and died of his contusions; thus abruptly closing the romance of a daring disturbed spirit.

Dee returned to England in December, 1589; and, presenting himself to the queen at Richmond, was received, as he was ever accustomed to be, with all graciousness. But the philosopher, after the absence of six years, returning to his studious abode, beheld it nearly dismantled: his chemical apparatus, with all his scientific implements, had been destroyed by a mob, and his library pillaged. Every day this victim of science experienced the effects of popular obloquy. He gathered up what fragments he could; and, again rapt in study, he again relapsed into his old wants. The *res angusta domi* once more disturbed his lares. Yet the queen was not unmindful of her philosopher: Mr. Cavendish was despatched to assure him that he might freely pursue his studies; and brought a royal Christmas gift of two hundred angels in gold, to be renewed with the season.

But the old man craved more than an uncertain eleemosynary bounty: his creditors multiplied, and the great will forget the man whom they rarely see. Dee has feelingly classed those who had outwearied his generous nature, "the ungrateful and the thankless, and the scorners and disdainers." The royal hand alone could repair his injuries, and vindicate his genius. Dee addressed a memorial to the queen, praying that a commission might be appointed to inquire into his case, which, as he energetically expressed himself, had

* This letter, from the Burleigh Papers, is printed by Strype. — *Annals*, iv. 3.

been "written with tears of blood." He did not draw up his petition as an illustrious pauper, but as a claimant for services performed.

A commission was immediately assigned, and it was followed by a literary scene of singular novelty.

Dee, sitting in his library, received the royal commissioners. Two tables were arranged: on one lay all the books he had published, manuscripts; the most extraordinary narrative of the transactions of his ow. This t his secretary read; and, as it proceeded, from the oth Dee presented the commissioners with every testin these vouchers consisted of royal letters from the quee rom princes, ambassadors, and the most illustrious person England and of Europe: passports which traced his l journals which noted his arrivals and departures: l appointments, and other remarkable evidences; and, when these were wanting, he appealed to living witnesses.

Among the employments which he had filled, he particularly alludes to "a painful journey in the winter season, of more than fifteen hundred miles, to confer with learned physicians on the Continent about her majesty's health." He showed the offers of many princes to the English philosopher to retire to their courts, and the princely establishment at Moscow proffered by the czar; but he had never faltered in his devotion to his sovereign. He appealed to the clerks of the records of the Tower, and to other antiquaries,* for his free distribution of the manuscripts which he had often discovered. He complains that his house at Mortlake was too public for his studies, and incommodious for receiving the numerous foreign literati who resorted to him. Of all the promised preferments, he would have chosen the Mastership

* We have several manuscript letters which passed between DEE and STOWE. They show all the warmth of their literary intercourse. Dee offers his present aid, and promises his future assistance.

of St. Cross for its seclusion. Here is a great man making great demands, but reposing with dignity on his claims: his wants were urgent; but the penury was not in his spirit. The commissioners, as they listened to this autobiography, must often have raised their eyes in wonder on the venerable and dignified author before them.

The report was most favorable: the queen spontaneously declared that Dee should have St. Cross, and the incumbent might be removed to a bishopric. She allotted him a considerable pension, and commanded Lady Howard to write "words of comfort" to his wife; and further sent an immediate supply by the hands of Sir Thomas Gorge. The letter to his wife and the ready money were, however, the only tangible gift; for St. Cross and the pension he never received!

Two years after, we find Dee still memoralizing. He published "A Letter Apologetical, with a Plain Demonstration and Fervent Protestation for the Course of the Philosophical Studies of *a Certain Studious Gentleman*," 1599. This was a vindication against the odium of magical practices. At length, the archbishop installed him in the wardenship of Manchester College; but, though our adventurer now drew into harbor, it was his destiny to live in storms. The inmates always suspected him of concealing more secrets of Nature than he was willing to impart; and the philosopher, who had received from great men in Europe such testimonies of their admiration, now was hourly mortified by the petty malice of the obscure fellows of his college. After several years of contention, he resigned a college which no occult arts he possessed could govern.

His royal patroness was no more. The light and splendor of the court had sunk beneath the horizon; and, in the chill evening of his life, the visionary looked up to those who were not susceptible of his innocent sorcery. Still retaining his lofty pretensions, he addressed the king, and afterwards the parliament. He implored to be freed from vulgar calumnies,

and to be brought to trial, that a judicial sentence might clear him of al those foul suspicions which had clouded over his days for more than half a century. It is to be regretted that this trial d not take place: the accusations and the defence would have supplied no incurious chapter in the history of the human mind. A necromancer, and a favorite with Elizabeth, was not l in the court of James the First. Cecil, l been taught by his father to admire the eruuuon eformer of the Gregorian Calendar, was not the same in the court of James the First as in that of Elizab resigned the sage to his solitude, and, with the poli he statesman, only reasonably enough observed, tha ould shortly go mad!"

Misfortune could nei nor change the ambitious spirit of the deserted p He still dreamed in a spiritual world which he nev nor heard; and hopefully went on working his stills, deprived of the powder of projection. He sold his books for a meal; and, if the gossiper Aubrey may be trusted, in such daily distress he may have practised on the simplicity of his humble neighbors by sometimes recovering a stolen basket of linen, though it seems he refused the more solemn conjuration of casting a figure for a stray horse! It is only in this degradation of sordid misery that he is shown to us in the "Alchemist" of Jonson. Weary, as he aptly expresses himself, of "sailing against the wind's eye," in 1608, in the eighty-first year of his age, he resolved to abandon his native land. There was still another and a better world for the pilgrim of science; and it was during the preparations to rejoin his continental friends in Germany that death closed all future sorrows.

It was half a century after the decease of Dr. Dee, that the learned Meric Casaubon amazed the world by publishing the large folio containing "A True and Faithful Relation of what passed many Years between Dr. JOHN DEE and SOME SPIRITS," 1659, from a copy in the Cottonian Library. Yet

is this huge volume but a torso: the mighty fragments, however, were recovered from the mischances of a kitchen fire, by Elias Ashmole, a virtuoso in alchemy and astrology, who toiled and trembled over the mystical and almost the interminable quires. Such is the fate of books! the world will for ever want the glorious fragments of Tacitus and Livy; but they have Dee passingly entire.*

MERIC CASAUBON was the learned son of a more learned father; but his erudition much exceeded his judgment. He had written a treatise against the delusions of "Enthusiasm," from whence the author derived but little benefit; for he demonstrated the existence of witches. Yet Meric Casaubon, meek and honest, was solicited by Cromwell to become his historiographer; but, from principle, he declined the profit and the honor: during the Oliverian rule, he became an hypochondriac, and has prefixed an hypochondriacal preface to this unparalleled volume. His faith is obsequious, and he confirms the verity of these conferences with "spirits" by showing that others before Dee had enjoyed such visitations. The fascination of a conference with "spirits" must have entered into the creed even of higher philosophers; for we are startled by discovering that the great Leibnitz observed on this preface, that "it deserves to be translated, *as well as the work itself*"! †

When this book of marvels was first published, the world was overcome by the revelations. Those saintly personages whose combined wisdom then assisted the councils of England, Owen, Goodwin, Nye, and others of that sort, held a solemn consistory for the suppression of the book. They entertained a violent suspicion that the whole of this incomprehensible

* The curious may find a copious narrative of the recovery of these manuscripts, written by Ashmole himself, printed in Ayscough's "Catalogue of Manuscripts," p. 371; where also he is referred to the autographs of Dee, in the British Museum.

† "General Dictionary," by BIRCH, art. *Meric Casaubon*,—Note B.

jargon was a covert design by some of the Church-of-England party, by a mockery of their own style, to expose the whole sainthood, who pretended so greatly to inspiration. But the bomb exploded at once, and spread in all directions; and, ere they could fit and unfit their textual debates, the book had been eagerly bought, and placed far beyond the reach of suppression.*

The "True Relation of what passed many Years between Dr. Dee and some Spirits" long excited curiosity which no one presumed to satisfy. During no less a period than five and twenty years was Dee recording what he terms his "Actions with Spirits;" for all was written by his own hand. It would be an extravagant inference to conclude, that a person of blameless character and grave habits would persevere through a good portion of his life in the profitless design of leaving a monument of posthumous folly solely to mystify posterity. Some fools of learning, indeed, have busied themselves in forging antiquities to bewilder some of their successors; but these malicious labors were the freaks of idle hours, not the devotion of a life. Even the imposture of Kelley will not wholly account for the credulity of Dee; for many years after their separation, and to his last days, Dee sought for, and at length found, another "skryer."† Are we to resolve these "Actions with Spirits" by the visions of another sage, a person eminent for his science, and a Rosicrucian of our own times, — that illustrious Emanuel Swedenborg,

* This literary anecdote I derive from a manuscript and contemporary note in the printed copy at the British Museum.

† This office of "skryer" is ambiguous: no dictionary will assist us. "In the year before he died, 1607, Dee procured one Bartholomew Hickman to serve him *in the same manner* as Kelley had done."—*Biog. Brit.*, v. 43. In what manner? Did Hickman pretend to descry the "actions of the spirits" in the show-stone, or only to drudge on the powder of projection? Forty years have elapsed since I turned over the interminable "Diary;" and now my eyes are dim, and my courage gone. I suspect, however, that that magical herb, eye-bright, however administered, will fail to penetrate through the darkness which surrounds the chaotic mass of manuscript.

who, in his reveries, communed with spirits and angels? It would thus be a great psychological phenomenon which remains unsolved.

No one has noticed, that a secret communication, uninterrupted through the protracted reign of Elizabeth, existed between the queen and the philosopher. The deep interest her majesty took in his welfare is strikingly revealed to us. Dee, in his frequent troubles, had constantly recourse to the queen; and she was ever prompt at his call. The personal attentions of the queen often gratified his master-passion: often she sent kind messages by her ladies and her courtiers; often was he received at Greenwich, Richmond, and at Windsor; and he was singularly honored by her majesty's visits at his house in Mortlake. The queen would sometimes appear waiting before his garden, when he would approach to kiss her hand, and solve some difficult inquiry she had prepared for him. On one of these occasions, Dee exhibited to her majesty a concave mirror, — a glass which had provoked too much awful discussion, but which would charm the queen while this Sir David Brewster of his age condescended to explain the optical illusions. When Dee, in his travels, was detained by sickness in Lorraine, her majesty despatched two of her own physicians to attend on this valued patient. The queen incessantly made golden promises of preferment: many eminent appointments were fixed on. He had, too, a patron in Leicester, the favorite of Elizabeth: for in that terrible state-libel of "Leicester's Commonwealth," among the instruments of that earl's dark agencies, we discover "Dee and Allen, two atheists, for figuring and conjuring;" that is, for astrological diagrams and magical invocations! * As, notwith-

* It requires a late posterity to correct the gross prejudices of contemporaries: it was not the least of the honors which Dee enjoyed to have been closely united with the studies of the "atheist" Allen, "the father of all learning and virtuous industry, infinitely beloved and admired by the court and the university." The ardent eulogy of Wood is earnest. — *Athen. Oxon.*, ii. 541.

standing the profusion of the queen's designs for his promotion, he received but little, and that little late, the sincerity of the royal patron has been arraigned. Mysterious as the philosopher's cabalistic jargon with which he sometimes entertained her, her majesty seems to have remunerated empty phrases by providing notional places: but Elizabeth may not have deserved this censure; she unfailingly supplied her money-gifts,—a ce evidence of her sincerity! The truth seems to be, that ro promises may be frustrated by intervening competitors an inisterial expedients. At the court, the evil genius of Dee ood ever by his side, saluting the philosopher with no frie voice, as "the arch-conjuror of the whole kingdom!" The philosopher struggled with the unconquerable prejudices of the age.

If we imagine that Elizabeth only looked on Dee as the great alchemist who was to replenish her coffers, or the mystic who propounded the world of spirits, this would not account for the queen permitting Dee to remain on the Continent during six years. Had such been the queen's hopes, she would have hermetically sealed the philosopher in his house at Mortlake, where, in her rides to Richmond, she might conveniently have watched the progress of gold-making, and listened to the theurgic revelations. Never would she have left this wanderer from court to court, with the chance of conveying to other princes such inappreciable results of the occult sciences.

What, then, was the cause of this intimate intercourse of the queen with Dr. Dee? and what the occasion of that mysterious journey of fifteen hundred miles in the winter season to consult physicians on her majesty's health, of which he had reminded the queen by her commissioners, but which they could not have comprehended? Did these mysterious physicians reside in one particular locality? and, in the vast intervening distance, were there no skilful physicians equally able for consultation?

A casual hint dropped by Lilly, the famous astrologer, will unveil the mysterious life of Dee during his six-years' residence abroad. Lilly tells us, that "for many years, in search of the profounder studies, he travelled into foreign parts: *to be serious*, he was Queen Elizabeth's intelligencer, and had a salary for his maintenance from the secretaries of state." Lilly, who is correct in his statements, except on the fabulous narratives of his professional art, must have written from some fact known to him; and it harmonizes with an ingenious theory to explain the unintelligible diary of Dee, suggested by Dr. ROBERT HOOKE, the eminent mathematician.

HOOKE, himself a great inventor in science, entertained a very high notion of the scientific character of Dee, and of his curiosity and dexterity in the philosophical arts, — optics, perspective, and mechanics. Deeply versed in chemistry, mathematics, and the prevalent study of astrology, like another Roger Bacon (or rather a Baptista Porta), delighting in the marvellous of philosophical experiments, he was sent abroad to amuse foreign princes, while he was really engaged by Elizabeth in state-affairs. Hooke, by turning over the awful tome, and comparing several circumstances with the history of his own life, was led to conclude that "all which relates to the spirits, their names, speeches, shows, noises, clothing, actions, &c., were all *cryptography;* feigned relations, concealing true ones of a very different nature. It was to prevent any accident, lest his papers should fall into hostile hands, that he preferred they should appear as the effusions of a visionary, rather than the secret history of a real spy. When the spirits are described as using inarticulate words unpronounceable according to the letters in which they are written, he conjectured that this gibberish would be understood by that book of Enoch which Dee prized so highly, and which Hooke considered to contain the cipher. Hooke, however, has not deciphered any of these inarticulate words; but, as the book of Enoch seems still to exist, this Apocalypse may

yet receive its commentator, — a task which it appears Dr. Adam Clarke once himself contemplated.*

There is one fatal objection to this ingenious theory of cryptography: this astounding diary opens long before Dee went abroad; and was continued long after his return, when it does not appear that he was employed in affairs of state.

* "As it is a Mysteries transcribed from the papers of Dr. J , Esq., preserved in the Sloane Library (Plutarch XVI., G), are a n of papers relative to state transactions between Elizabeth, her m.... , and different foreign powers, in which Dr. Dee was em an official agent openly, and at other times as a spy, l n extract from the whole work, and endeavor, if possible, to get a pen the Mysteries. — A. C."— *Cat. of Adam Clarke's Manuscripts.*

THE ROSACRUSIAN FLUDD.

THE confraternity of the Rose-cross long attracted public notice. Congenial with the more ancient Freemasonry, it was probably designed for a more intellectual order: it was entitled "the Enlightened," "the Immortal," and "the Invisible." Its name has been frequently used to veil mysteries, to disguise secret agents, and to carry on those artful impostures which we know have been practised on infirm credulity by the dealers in thaumaturgical arts, to a very recent period. The modern illuminati, of whom not many years past we heard so much, are conjectured to have branched out of the sublime society of the Rose-cross.

This mystical order sprung up among that mystical people, the Germans, who are to this day debating on its origin; for, like other secret societies, its concealed source eludes the search. It was at the beginning of the seventeenth century, that a German divine, John Valentine Andreæ, a scholar of enlarged genius, in his controversial writings amused his readers by certain mysterious allusions to a society for the regeneration of science and religion: in the ambiguity of his language, it remained doubtful whether the society was already instituted, or was to be instituted. Suddenly a new name was noised through Europe, — the name of Christian Rosencreutz, the founder, three centuries back, of a secret society; and a eulogy of the order was dispersed in five different languages.

The name of the founder seemed as mystical as the secret

order, the Rose and the Cross.* The rose, with the Germans, which was placed in the centre of their ceiling, was the emblem of domestic confidence, — whence we have our phrase "under the rose;" and the cross, the consecrated symbol of Christianity, described the order's holy end: such notions might suit a mystical divine.† In the legend, the visionary founder was said to have brought from Palestine all the secrets of nature and of art elixir of longevity, and the stone so vainly called p ical.‡

If to some the society had a pro matical existence, others were convinced of its reality: l ed men became its disciples, its defenders; and one e ent person published its laws and its customs. Michael er, the physician of the Emperor Rodolph, who had enn d him for his services, having become initiated by some adepts, travelled over all Germany seeking every brother, and from their confidential instruction collected their laws and customs. At the same time, ROBERT FLUDD, a learned physician of our own country, distinguished for his science and his mysticism, introduced Rosacrusianism into England: its fervent disciple, he furnished an apology for the mystical brotherhood when it seemed to require one.

The arcane tomes of Fludd often spread, and still with

* Fuller's amusing explanation of the term Rosa-crusian was written without any knowledge of the suppositious founder. He says, "Sure I am that a Rose is the sweetest of flowers, and a Cross accounted the sacredest of forms and figures; so that much of eminency must be imported in their composition." — *Fuller's Worthies.*

† The chemists, in the style of their arcana, explain the term by the mystical union, in their secret operations, of the dew and the light. They derive the dew from the Latin *Ros;* and, in the figure of a cross ×, they trace the three letters which compose the word *Lux*, "light." Mosheim is positive in the accuracy of his information. I would not answer for my own, though somewhat more reasonable: it is indeed difficult to ascertain the origin of the name of a society which probably never had an existence.

‡ In the Harleian Manuscripts, from 6481 to 6486, are several Rosacrusian writings, some translated from the Latin by one Peter Smart, and others by a Dr. Rudd, who appears to have been a profound adept.

"the elect" may yet spread, an inebriating banquet of "the occult sciences," — all the reveries of the ancient cabalists, the abstractions of the lower Platonists, and the fancies of the modern Paracelsians, all that is mysterious and incomprehensible, with the rich condiment of science. There are some eyes which would still pierce into truths muffled in jargon and rhapsody, and dwell on the images of realities in the delirious dreams of the learned.

Two worlds, "the Macrocosm," or the great visible world of nature, and "the Microcosm," or the little world of man, form the comprehensive view, designed, to use Fludd's own terms, as "an encyclophy, or epitome of all arts and sciences."* This Rosacrusian philosopher seeks for man in Nature herself, and watches that creative power in her little mortal miniatures. In his Mosaic philosophy, founded on the first chapter of Genesis, our seer, standing in the midst of chaos, separates the three principles of the creation, — the palpable darkness, the movement of the waters, at length the divine light! The corporeity of angels and devils is distinguished on the principle of *rarum et densum*, thin or thick. Angelic beings, through their transparency, reflect the luminous Creator; but, externally formed of the most spiritual part of water or air, by contracting their vaporous subtilty, may "visibly and organically talk with man." The devils are of a heavy gross air; so Satan, the apostle called "the prince of air:" but in touch they are excessive cold, because the spirit by which they live, — as this philosopher proceeds to demonstrate, — drawn and contracted into the centre, the circumference of dilated air remains icy cold. From angels and demons, the Rosacrusian would approach

* These are his words in reply to his adversary Foster, the only work which he published in English, in consequence of the attack being in the vernacular idiom. The term here introduced into the language is, perhaps, our most ancient authority for the modern term *Encyclopædia*, which Chambers curtailed to *Cyclopædia*.

even to the Divinity: calculating the infinity by his geometry, he reveals the nature of the Divine Being, as "a pure monad, including in itself all numbers;" a paradoxical expression, lying more in the words than the idea, which called down an anathema on the impiety of our theosophist for ascribing "composition unto God." The occult philosopher warded off this perilous stroke. "If I have said that God is in composition, I mean it not as a part compounding, but as the sole compounder, in the apostolic style: 'He is over all, and in all.'" He detects the origin of evil in the union of the sexes: the sensual organs of the mother of mankind were first opened by the fruit which tasted the future human race. He broods over the mystery of life, — production and corruption, regeneration and resurrection! On the lighter topics of mortal studies he exhibits ingenious conceptions. The title of one of his treatises is 'De Naturæ Simia," or "the Ape of Nature," — that is, ART! a single image, but a fertile principle.

Sympathies and antipathies, divine and human, are among the mysteries of our nature. By two universal principles, the boreal, or condensing power of cold, and the austral, or the rarefaction of heat, impulsion and repulsion, our physician explains the active operations in the human frame, — notions not wholly fanciful; but, at once medical and magical, this doctrine led him into one of the most extraordinary conceptions of mystical invention, yet which long survived the inventor, so seductive were the first follies of science.

Man exists in the perpetual opposition of sympathies and antipathies; and the cabalist in the human frame beheld the contests of spirits, benevolent or malign, trooping on the four viewless winds which were to be submitted to his occult potentiality. Nor was the physician unsuccessful; for, in the sweetness of his elocution, pleasant fancies and elevated conceptions operated on the charmed faith of his imaginative patients.

The mysterious qualities of the magnet were held by Fludd

as nothing less than an angelical effluvia. In his "Mystic Anatomy," to heal the wounds of a person miraculously, at any distance, he prescribed a cabalistical, astrological, and magnetic unguent. A drop of blood obtained from the wound mixed with this unguent, and the unguent applied to the identical instrument which inflicted the wound, would, however distant the patient resided, act and heal by the virtue of sympathy. This singular operation was ludicrously named "the weapon-salve."

Fludd not only produces the attestations of eminent persons, who, in charity we may believe, imagined that they had perfectly succeeded in practising his "mystic anatomy," but he also alleges for its authority the practice of Paul, who cured diseases by only requiring that the handkerchiefs and aprons of patients should be brought to him. Hardly a single extravagance of the Paracelsian fancy of Fludd but rests on some scriptural authority, on some fictitious statement, or some credulous imagination. Fludd, indeed, as our plain Oxford antiquary shrewdly opineth, was "strangely profound in obscure matters."* A curious tract was published by FLUDD, to clear himself from the odium of magical dealings, in reply to a fiery parson, one Foster, who took an extraordinary mode of getting his book read,—by nailing it at the door of the Rosacrusian at night, that it might be turned over in the morning by the whole parish! This was "A Sponge to Wipe away the Weapon-salve," showing that "to cure by applying the salve to the weapon is magical and unlawful." The parson evidently supposed that it did cure! Fludd replied by "the Squeezing of Parson Foster's Sponge.

* The collected writings of ROBERT FLUDD, under the Latinized name "De Fluctibus," should form six volumes folio. His "Philosophia Mosaica" has been translated, 1659, folio. He makes Moses a great Rosacrusian. The secret brotherhood must be still willing to give costly prices for their treasure. At the recent sale of Mr. Hibbert, the "Opera" of Fludd obtained twenty pounds! The copy was doubtless "very fine;" but the price was surely cabalistical. Nor are these tomes slightly valued on the Continent.

1631, 4t — "to crush and squeeze his sponge, and make it by force to vomit up again the truth which it hath devoured." Our sage throughout displays the most tempered disposition and the most fervent genius; but the nonsense is equally curious.

We smile at the *sympathy* of "the weapon-salve;" but we must not forget that this occult power was the received philosophy of the days of our ian. Who has not heard of "the sympatl ic powder" Kenelm Digby, by which the bloody g ames l was cured, and consequently its pie owner. wit his own knowledge? or of the "sympat ne great author of "Vulgar Errors," by whi though s perplexed, he concluded that two lo n corr nvisibly? and, above all others, the warts o rulam, by sympathy with the lard which had asting away as the lard rotted when nailed on the window? Lord Bacon acquaints us that "it is constantly received and avouched, that *the anointing of the weapon that maketh the wound* will heal the wound itself."* Indeed, Lord Bacon himself had discovered as magical a sympathy; for he presented Prince Henry, as "the first-fruits of his philosophy, *a sympathizing stone*, made of several mixtures, to know the heart of man," whose "operative gravity, magnetic and magical, would show, by the hand that held it, whether the heart was warm and affectionate." The philosophy of that day was infinitely more amusing than our own "exact" sciences!

We may smile at jargon in which we have not been initiated, at whimsical combinations we do not fancy, at analogies where we lose all semblance, and at fables which we know to be nothing more; but we may credit that these mys-

* "Lord Bacon's Natural History," cent. x. 998. — "In this experiment upon the relation of men of credit, though myself as yet am not fully inclined to believe it," his lordship gives ten notes or points as extraordinary as "the ointment" itself.

tical terms of the learned FLUDD conceal many profound and original views, and many truths not yet patent. It is enough that one of the deepest scholars, our illustrious SELDEN, highly appreciated the volumes and their author. It is indeed remarkable that Bayle, Niceron, and other literary historians, have not ventured to lay their hands on this ark of theosophical science; too modest to dispute, or too generous to attack: unlike the great adversary of Fludd, Père Mersenne, who denounced the Rosacrusian to Europe as a caco-magician, who had insured for himself perdition throughout eternity.

Père Mersenne, at Paris, stood at the head of the mathematical class; the early companion, and to his last day the earnest advocate, of Descartes. That great philosopher was secretly disposed not to reject all the reveries of the occult philosophers. It is certain that he had listened with complacency to the universal elixir, which was to preserve human life to an indefinite period; and one of his disciples, when he heard of his death, persisted in not crediting the account. His own vortices displayed the picturesque fancy of a Rosacrusian; and moreover, likewise, he was calumniated as an atheist. Père Mersenne not only defended his friend, but, to clear the French philosopher of any such disposition, he attacked the Rosacrusians themselves. Too vehement in his theological hatreds, he dared to publish too long a nomenclature of the atheists of his times;* and among Machiavel, Cardan, Campanella, and Vanini, appears the name of our pious Fludd. Mersenne expressed his astonishment that James the First suffered such a man to live and to write.

On this occasion, Fludd was more fortunate than Dee. He obtained an interview with his learned sovereign, to clear himself of "the friar's scandalous report." He found his majesty "regally learned and gracious; excellent and subtile in

* This list appeared in some Commentaries on Genesis, but was suppressed in most of the copies: the whole has, however, been recovered by Chauffepié in his Dictionary.

his inquisitive objections; and, instead of a check, I had much grace and honor from him, and I found him my kingly patron all the days of his life." Mersenne, notwithstanding the odium he cast on the personal character of Fludd, was willing to bribe the heresiarch; for he offered to unite with him in any work for the correction of science and art, provided Fludd would return to that catholic creed which his ancestors had professed. "I tell this to my countrymen's shame," exclaims Fludd, "who, instead of encouraging me in my labors, as by letters from Polonia, Suevia, Prussia, Germany, Transylvania, France, and Italy, I have had, do pursue with malice; which when a learned German heard of, it reminded him of the speech of Christ, that 'no man is a prophet in his own country.' Without any bragging of my knowledge, be it spoken, I speak this feelingly; but a guiltless conscience bids me be patient."

The writings of Fludd are all composed in Latin: it is remarkable that the works of an English officer, residing in England, should be printed at Frankfort, Oppenheim, and Gouda. This singularity is accounted for by the author himself. Fludd, in one respect, resembled Dee: he could find no English printers who would venture on their publication. When Foster insinuated that his character as a magician was so notorious, that he dared not print at home, Fludd tells his curious story: "I sent my writings beyond the seas, because our home-born printers demanded of me five hundred pounds to print the first volume, and to find the cuts in copper: but beyond the seas it was printed at no cost of mine, and as I could wish; and I had sixteen copies sent me over, with forty pounds in gold, as an unexpected gratuity for it." It is evident that, throughout Europe, they were infinitely more inquisitive in their occult speculations than we in England: and, however this may now seem to our credit, certainly our incuriosity was not then a consequence of our superior science; for he whose mighty mind was to give a new and enduring impulse to the

study of Nature, who was to teach us how to philosophize, and was now drawing us out of this dark forest of the human intellect into the lucid expanse of his creative mind, was himself still fascinated by magical sympathies, surmised why witches eat human flesh, and instructed us in the doctrine of spirits, angelic and demoniac. Bacon would have elucidated the theory of Dee and the imaginative mysticism of the Rosacrusian.

BACON.

In the age of Elizabeth, the En[illegible]h mind took its first bent: a new-born impulse in the natio[illegible] everywhere was working out its religion, its legislation, a[illegible] its literature. In every class of genius, there existed no[illegible]ng to copy: every thing that was to be great was to find[illegible] beginning. Those maritime adventurers in this reig[illegible]o sailed to discover new regions, and those heroes whose chivalric spirit was errant in the marshes of Holland, were not more enterprising than the creators of our peaceful literature.

Among these first INVENTORS, — our epical SPENSER; our dramatic SHAKSPEARE and JONSON; our HOOKER, who sounded the depths of the origin of law; and our RAWLEIGH, who first opened the history of mankind, — at length appeared the philosopher who proclaimed a new philosophy, emancipating the human mind by breaking the chains of scholastic antiquity. He was a singular being who is recognized without his name.

Aristotle, in taking possession of all the regions of knowledge, from the first had assumed a universal monarchy, more real than that of his regal pupil; for he had subjugated the minds of generation after generation. Through a long succession of ages, and amid both extinct and new religions, the writings of the mighty Stagirite, however long known by mutilated and unfaithful versions, were equally studied by the Mahometan Arabian and the Rabbinical Hebrew; and, during the scholastic ages, were even placed by the side, and sometimes above, the gospel; and the ten categories, which pre-

tended to classify every object of human apprehension, were held as another revelation. Centuries succeeded to centuries; and the learned went on translating, commenting, and interpreting the sacred obscurity of the autocratical edict of a genius whose lofty omniscience seemed to partake in some degree of divinity itself.

But, from this passive obedience to a single encyclopedic mind, a fatal consequence ensued for mankind. The schoolmen had formed, as Lord Bacon has nobly expressed himself, "an unhallowed conjunction of divine with human matters;" theology itself was turned into a system, drawn out of the artificial arrangements of Aristotle; they made their orthodoxy dependent on "the scholastic gibberish;"* and to doubt any doctrine of "the philosopher," as Aristotle was paramountly called, might be to sin by a syllogism, — heretical, if not atheistical. In reality, it was to contend, without any possibility of escape, with the ecclesiastical establishment, whose integrity was based on the immovable conformity of all human opinions. Every university in Europe, whose honors and emoluments arose from their Aristotelian chairs, stood as the sentinels of each intellectual fortress. Speculative philosophy could therefore no further advance: it could not pass that inviolable circle which had circumscribed the universal knowledge of the human race. No one dared to think his own thoughts, to observe his own observations, lest by some fortuitous discovery, in differing from the Aristotelian dialectic, he might lapse from his Christianity. The scholastical sects were still agitating the same topics; for the same barbarous terms supplied, on all occasions, verbal disputations, which even bloody frays could never terminate.

* The Abate ANDRES, in his erudite "Origine, &c., d'ogni Letteratura," gives this remarkable description, — "i GHIRIBIZZI *della Dialettica e Metafisica d'Aristotele.*" As we are at a loss to discover the origin of the term *gibberish*, and as it is suitable to the present occasion, may we conjecture that we have here found it? — xii. 26.

If we imagine that this awful fabric of the Aristotelian or scholastic philosophy was first shaken by the Verulamian, we should be conferring on a single individual a sudden influence which was far more progressive. In a great revolution, whence we date a new era, we are apt to lose sight of those devious paths and those marking incidents which in all human affairs are the prognostics and the preparations: the history of the human mind would be imperfectly revealed, should we not trace the great inventors in their precursors.

Early in the sixteenth century appeared simultaneously a number of extraordinary geniuses. An age of philosophical inventors seemed to arise; a new generation, who, each in his own way, were emancipating themselves from the dogmas of the ancient dictator. This revolt against the old scholastics broke forth in Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, and even reached our shores. These philosophers were the contemporaries of Luther: they were not engaged in his theological reformation; but it is more than probable that they had caught the inspiration of his hardy spirit. We are indeed told that the famous Cornelius Agrippa, though he could not desert the Rome of his patrons, yet saw with satisfaction its great pontiff attacked by Luther; as Erasmus and others equally delighted to satirize all the scholastic monkery.* Luther, too, made common cause with them, in the demolition of that ancient edifice of scholastic superstition, which, under the supremacy of Aristotle, barred out every free inquiry.

Of these eminent men, an elegant scholar, Ludovicus Vives, by birth a Spaniard, had been invited to the English court by our Henry the Eighth, to be the preceptor of the Princess Mary. Vives, too, was the friend of Erasmus; but, while that facetious sage only expended his raillery on the scholastic madness, Vives formally attacked the chief, whose final authority

* Enfield, ii. 448.

he declared had hitherto solely rested on the indolence of the human mind. Ramus, in France, advanced with more impetuous fury: he held a public disputation against the paramount authority of the Stagirite in philosophy; and, in his "Aristotelian Animadversions," he profanely shivered into atoms of absurdity the syllogistic method, and substituted for the logic of Aristotle one of his own, which was long received in all the schools of the reformed; for Ramus was a Huguenot. This innovator was denounced to the magistrate; for, by opposing Aristotle, he had committed open hostility against religion and learning! The erudite Abate Andres, probably an Aristotelian at heart, observes, in noticing the continued persecutions of this bold spirit, that, "to tell the truth, Ramus injured himself far more than the Aristotelian doctrine which he had impugned;"* and true enough, if it were a rival Aristotelian who cast Ramus out of the window, to be massacred by the mob on St. Bartholomew's Day. Two eminent scholars of Italy contested more successfully the doctrines of Aristotle: Patricius collected every thing he could to degrade and depreciate that philosopher, and to elevate the more seductive and imaginative Plato. He asserted that Aristotle was the plagiarist of other writers, whose writings he invariably affected to contemn; and he went so far as to suggest to the pope to prohibit the teaching of the Aristotelian doctrines in the schools; for the doctrines of Plato more harmoniously accorded with the Christian faith. Less learned, but more original, than Patricius, the Neapolitan Telesius struck out a new mode of philosophizing. The study of mathematics had indicated to Telesius a severe process in his investigations of Nature, and had taught him to reject those conjectural solutions of the phenomena of the material world, — subtleties and fictions which had led Aristotle into many errors, and whose universal authority had

* Andres "Dell' Origine e Progressi d'ogni Letteratura," xv. 165.

swayed opi ions through successive ages. "Telesius," says Lord Bacon, "hath renewed the tenet of Parmenides, and is the best of our novelists."* Lord Bacon considered the Telesian system worthy of his development and his refutation. But, by his physical system, Telesius had broken the spell, and sent forth the naturalist to scrutinize more closely into Nature; and possibly this Neapolitan sage may have kindled the first spark in the experime hilosophy of Bacon.

All these were eminent pl ers who had indignantly rejected the eternal babble of scholastics, and the vain dicta of the peripatetics; and in same cycle were others more erratic and fantastic. T bold artificers of novel systems of philosophy had not successfully attacked the dogmas of Aristotle, but to little urpose, while they were substituting their own. The pre lent agitation of the philosophical spirit, now impetuous nd disturbed, shot forth mighty impulses in imaginary directions, and created chimeras. Agrippa and Paracelsus, Jordano Bruno, Cardan and Campanella, played their "fantastic tricks," till the patient genius of the new philosophy arose simultaneously in the Italian Galileo and the founder of the Verulamian method.

Amid the ruins of these systems of philosophies, it was not with their fallen columns that Lord Bacon designed to construct a new philosophy of his own, — a system in opposition to other systems. He would hold no controversies; for refutations were useless, if the method he invented was a right one. He would not even be the founder of a sect; for he presumed not to establish a philosophy, but to show how we should philosophize. The father of experimental philosophy delivered no "opinions," but "a work;" patient observation, practical results, or new and enlarged sciences, "not to be found in the space of a single age, but through a succession of generations." D'Alembert observed, "The Baconian philosophy was too wise

* Montagu's Bacon, iv. 46.

to astonish." His early sagacity had detected the fatal error of all system-makers: each, to give coherence to his hypothesis, had recourse to some occult operation; and sometimes had ventured to give it a name which was nothing more than an abstract notion, and not a reality ascertained to exist in nature. The Platonist had buried his lofty head amid the clouds of theology, beyond the aspirations of man: the Aristotelian, by the syllogistic method of reasoning, had invented a mere instrument of perpetual disputation, without the acquisition of knowledge; and in the law which governed the material world, when Democritus had conceived his atom, and endowed it with a desire or appetency to move with other atoms, or Telesius imagined with cold and heat to find the first beginnings of motion, — what had they but contracted Nature within the bars of their systems, while she was perpetually escaping from them? The greater philosopher sought to follow Nature through her paths, to be "her servant and interpreter;" or, as he has also expressed it, "to subdue Nature by yielding to her."

Lord Bacon was conscious of the slow progress of truth; he has himself appealed to distant ages. So progressive is human reason, that a novel system, at its first announcement, has been resisted as the most dangerous innovation, or rejected as utterly false; yet, at a subsequent period, the first promulgator who had struck into the right road is censured, not for his temerity, but for his timidity, in not having advanced to its termination, and laying the burden on posterity to demonstrate that which he had only surmised or assumed. It is left to another generation to shoot their arrow forth a truer aim, far more distantly. Some of the most important results in philosophical inquiries, by men who have advanced beyond their own age, have been subjected to this inconvenience; and we now are familiarized to axioms and principles, requiring no further demonstration, which, in their original discovery, were condemned as dangerous and erroneous; for

the most novel principles must be disputed before they can be demonstrated, till Time in silence seals its decree with authority.

Some discoveries have required almost a century to be received; while some truths remain still problematical, and, like the ether of Newton, but a mere hypothesis. What is the wisdom of the wise but a state of progression? and the inventor has to encounter even the ho[illegible]f his brothers in science: even Lord Bacon himself was the [illegible]ictim of his own idols of the den, — those fallacies that o[illegible]ginate from the peculiar character of the man; for, by u[illegible]ervaluing the science of mathematics, he refused his assent to the Copernican system.

The celebrity of Lord Bacon was often distinct from the Baconian philosophy at home, — a circumstance which concerns the history of our vernacular literature. The lofty pretensions of a new way to "the Advancement of Learning," and the "Novum Organum" of an art of invention, to invent arts, were long a veiled mystery to the English public, who were deterred from its study by the most offuscating translations of the Latin originals. English readers recognized in Lord Bacon, not the interpreter of Nature through all her works, but the interpreter of man to man, of their motives and their actions, in his "Sermones Fideles," those "Essaies" which "come home to our business and to our bosoms." Such readers were left to wonder how the historian of "the Winds," and of "Life and Death," the gatherer of medical receipts and of masses of natural history, amid all such minute processes of experiments and inductions, groping in tangible matter, as it seemed to ordinary eyes, could in the mere naturalist be the creator of a new philosophy of intellectual energy. The ethical sage who had unfolded the volume of the heart they delightfully comprehended; but how the mind itself stood connected with the outward phenomena of Nature remained long an enigma for the men of the world. Lord Bacon, in his dread to trust the mutability of our language

placed by the side of the universal language of the learned which fifteen centuries had fixed sacred from innovation, had concluded that the modern languages will "at one time or another play the bankrupt with books." The sage who, in his sanguine confidence in futurity, had predicted that "third period of time which will far surpass that of the Grecian and Roman learning," had not, however, contemplated on a national idiom; nor in that noble prospect of time had he anticipated a race of the European learned, whose vernacular prose would create words beyond the reach of the languages of antiquity. No work in our native idiom had yet taken a station. The volume of Hooker we know not how he read; but the copiousness of the diction little accorded with the English of the learned Lord Chancellor, who had pressed the compactness of his aphoristic sentences into the brevity of Seneca, but with a weight of thought no Roman, if we accept Tacitus, has attained. Rawleigh and Jonson were but contemporaries, unsanctioned by time; nor could he have looked even on them as modellers for him whose own genius was still more prodigally opulent, though not always with the most difficult taste.

Lord Bacon, therefore, decided to compose his "Instauratio Magna" in Latin. Dedicating the Latin version of the "Advancement of Learning" to the prince, he observed, "It is a work I think will live, and be a *citizen of the world, as English books are not.*" Lord Bacon saw "bankruptcy in our language," and houseless wanderers in our books. The commonwealth of letters had yet no existence. Haunted by this desolating notion that there was no perpetuity in English writings, he rested not till his own were translated by himself and his friends, Jonson and Hobbes and Herbert; and, often enlarging these Latin versions, some of his English compositions remain, in some respect, imperfect, when compared with those subsequent revisions in the Latin translations.

By trusting his genius to a foreign tongue, Lord Bacon has dimmed its lustre: the vitality of his thoughts in their origi-

nal force, the spontaneity of his mind in all its raciness, all those fortuitous strokes which are the felicities of genius, were lost to him who had condemned himself to the Roman yoke. Professor Playfair always preferred quoting the original English of those passages of the treatise "De Augmentis Scientiarum" which had first appeared in "the Advancement of Learning." The felicity of many of those fine or forcible conceptions is emasculated in a foreign and artificial idiom; and the invention of novel terms in an ancient language left it often in a clouded obscurity.

The hand of Lord Bacon had already moulded the language at pleasure, and he might have preceded his friend Hobbes in the lucidity of a philosophical style. The style of Lord Bacon is stamped with the originality of the age, and is as peculiar to him as was that of Shakspeare to the poet. He is not only the wittiest of writers in his remote allusions, but poetical in his fanciful conceptions. His style long served for a model to many succeeding writers. One of the most striking imitations is that curious folio of secret history, and brilliant sententiousness, and witty pedantry, the Life of Archbishop Williams by Bishop HACKET. It was with declining spirit Lord Bacon composed his "History of Henry the Seventh;" it was an oblation to majesty: the king himself was his critic; and the Solomon, as he terms Henry the Seventh, was that image of peaceful sovereignty which James affected.

He who thought that the language would have failed him has himself failed to the language, and we have lost an English classic. Since the experimental philosophy arose out of practical discoveries, it should not have been limited to recluse students, but open to the practitioners not yet philosophers, now condemned to study it by translations of a translation. It required two centuries before the writings of Bacon reached the many. Now, a single volume, in the most popular form, places them in the hands of artisans and ar-

tists, who are to learn from them to think, to observe, and to invent.

The first modern edition of the collected writings of Lord Bacon was that by Blackbourne, in 1730. It probably awoke the public attention: but English readers eager to possess themselves of the Baconian philosophy were still doomed to their old ignorance; for no one was yet to be found bold enough to risk versions, which in the mere translation often require to be elucidated. This first edition, however, hastened the arduous task of "methodizing" the philosophy of Bacon in English, by Dr. PETER SHAW, in 1733, who then suggested that the noble Baconian scheme had not been "sufficiently understood and regarded." This Dr. SHAW was one of the court physicians, attached to scientific pursuits, which he usefully displayed by popular lectures and writings on subjects with which the public were then not familiar. Imbued with the genius of Bacon, this diligent student unfortunately had a genius of his own: he fancied that he could reconstruct the works of our great philosopher by a more perfect arrangement. He separated, or he joined; he classed, and he new-named; and not the least curious of his singularities is that of assigning right principles for his wrong-doings. He did not abridge his author; for justly he observes, great works admit of no abridgment: but, to shorten their extent, he took the liberty of what he terms "dropping;" that is, "leaving out." Of his translations of the Latin originals, of which he experienced all the difficulty, he observes, that "a direct translation would have left the works more obscure than they are;" and therefore he adopted what he terms "an open version." A precise notion of this mode of free translation it might be difficult to fix on: it would be too open if it admitted what was not in the original, or if it suffered what was essential to escape. His irremissible sin was that of "modernizing the English" of Lord Bacon. The most racy and picturesque expressions of our elder writers

were then to be weakened down to a vapid colloquial style. Willymot had translated Lord Bacon's "Essays" from the Latin, and thus substituted his own loose incondite sentences, which he deemed "more fashionable language," for the brilliancy or the energy of Lord Bacon's native vein. Dr. Shaw's three goodly quartos, however, long conveyed in some shape to the English public the Baconian philosophy. There is something still seductive in these fair volumes, with their copious index, and a glossary of the philosophical terms invented by Bacon: I loved them in the early days of my studies, and they have been deemed worthy to be revived in a late edition.

In my youth, the illustrious name of Lord Bacon was more familiar to readers than his works; and they were more frequently reminded of the Lord Chancellor by the immortal verse of Pope than by that Life of Bacon by Mallet which may be read without discovering that the subject was the father of modern philosophy; excepting that in the last page, as if accidentally, there occurs a slight mention of the Great Instauration itself! The very choice of Mallet, in 1740, for an editor of Lord Bacon, is a striking evidence how imperfectly the genius of the instaurator of sciences was comprehended.

The psychological history of Lord Bacon has all that oneness which is the perfection of mind. We see him in his boyhood, studious of the phenomena of Nature, meditating on the multiplication of echoes at the brick-conduit, near his father's house: there he sought to discover the laws of sound; as in his latest days, when on the snowy road an experiment suddenly occurred, "touching the conservation and the induration of bodies," whether snow could not preserve flesh equally with salt. Alighting from his carriage, with his own hands he assisted the experiment, and was struck by that chilliness, which, a few days after, closed in death; yet the dying naturalist, too weak to write the last letter he dictated,

expressed his satisfaction that the experiment "answered excellently well."

But he who, by the cruelty of fortune and mortal infirmity, lived many lives in the span of one short life, ever wrestling with Nature to subdue her, could never subdue himself by himself. He idolized state and magnificence in his own person; the brilliancy of his robes and the blaze of his equipage his imagination seemed to feed on; he loved to be gazed on in the streets, and to be wondered at in the cabinet: but, with this feminine weakness, this philosopher was still so philosophic as to scorn the least prudential care of his fortune; so that, while he was enamoured of wealth, he could not bring himself down to the love of money. Participating in the corruptions of the age, he was himself incorruptible: the Lord Chancellor never gave a partial or unjust sentence; and Rushworth has told us, that not one of his decrees was ever reversed. Such a man was not made to crouch and to fawn, to breathe the infection of a corrupted court, to make himself the scapegoat in the mysterious darkness of court-intrigues; but he was this man of wretchedness! Truly he exclaimed one day, in grasping a volume, "For this only am I fitted." The intellectual architect who had modelled his house of Solomon, and should have been for ever the ideal inhabitant of that palace of the mind, was the tenant of an abode of disorder, where every one was master but its owner, a maculated man seeking to shelter himself in dejection and in shade. Whisperers, surmisers, evil eyes and evil tongues, the domestic asp whose bite sends poison into the veins of him on whom it hangs, — these were his familiars, while his abstracted mind was dictating to his chaplain the laws and economy of Nature.

Yet there were some better spirits in the mansion of Gorhambury, and even in the obscurity of Gray's Inn, who have left testimonies of their devotion to the great man long after his death. In the psychological history of Lord Bacon,

we must not pass by the psychological monument which the affectionate Sir Thomas Meautys, who, by his desire, lies buried at his feet, raised to his master. The design is as original as it is grand, and is said to have been the invention of Sir Henry Wotton, who, in his long residence abroad, had formed a refined taste for the arts which were yet strangers in England. The simplicity of our ancestors had placed their sculptured figures recumbent on their tombs: the taste of Wotton raised the marble figure to imitate life itself, and to give the mind of the original to its image. The monument of Bacon exhibits the great philosopher seated in profound contemplation in his habitual attitude; for the inscription records for posterity, *Sic sedebat.**

* See "Curiosities of Literature," art. "Bacon at Home."

THE FIRST FOUNDER OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

THE first marked advancement in the progress of the national understanding was made by a new race of public benefactors, who, in their munificence, no longer endowing obsolete superstitions and inefficient or misplaced charities, erected libraries, and opened academies; founders of those habitations of knowledge whose doors open to the bidding of all comers.

To the privacy and the silent labors of some men of letters and some lovers of the arts, usually classed under the general designation of COLLECTORS, literary Europe, for the great part, owes its public museums and its public libraries. It was their ripe knowledge only which could have created them, their opulence only which could render them worthy of a nation's purchase, or of its acceptance, when in their generous enthusiasm they consecrated the intellectual gift for their countrymen.

These collections could only have acquired their strength by their growth; for gradual were their acquisitions, and innumerable were their details: they claimed the sleepless vigilance of a whole life, the devotion of a whole fortune, and often that moral intrepidity which wrestled with insurmountable difficulties. We may admire the generous enthusiasm whose opulence was solely directed to enrich what hereafter was to be consecrated as public property; but it has not always received the notice and the eulogy so largely its due. It is but bare justice to distinguish these men from their numerous brothers whose collections have terminated with

themselves, known only to posterity by their posthumous catalogues, — the sole record that these collectors were great buyers and more famous sellers. Of many of the FOUNDERS of public collections, the names are not familiar to the reader; though some have sometimes been identified with their more celebrated collections, from the gratitude of a succeeding age.

A collection formed by a single mind, skilled in its favorite pursuit, becomes the tangible depository of the thoughts of its owner: there is a unity in this labor of love, and a secret connection through its dependent parts. Thus we are told that Cecil's library was the best for history; Walsingham's, for policy; Arundel's, for heraldry; Cotton's, for antiquity; and Usher's, for divinity. The completion of such a collection reflects the perfect image of the mind of the philosopher, the philologist, the antiquary, the naturalist, the scientific or the legal character, who into one locality has gathered together and arranged this furniture of the human intellect.

To disperse their collections, would be, to these elect spirits, to resolve them back into their first elements, — to scatter them in the air, or to mingle them with the dust.* Happily for mankind, these have been men to whom the perpetuity of their intellectual associations was a future existence. Conscious that their hands had fastened links in the unbroken chain of human inquiry, they left the legacy to the world. The creators of these collections have often betrayed their anxiety to preserve them distinct and entire. Confident I am that such was the real feeling of a recent celebrated collector. The rich and peculiar collection of manuscripts, and of rare and chosen volumes, of FRANCIS DOUCE, from his

* Sir Simonds d'Ewes feelingly describes in his will his "precious library." "It is my inviolable injunction that it be kept entire, and not sold, divided, or dissipated." It was not, however, to be locked up from the public good. Such was the feeling of an eminent antiquary.

A later Sir Simonds d'Ewes was an extravagant man, and seems to have sold every thing about 1716, when the collection passed into the possession of the Earl of Oxford.

earliest days had been the objects of his incessant cares. With means extremely restricted, but with a mind which no obstructions could swerve from its direct course, through many years he accomplished a glorious design. Our modest antiquary startled the most curious, not only of his countrymen, but of foreigners, by his knowledge, diversified as his own unrivalled collections, in the recondite literature of the middle ages, and whatever exhibited the manners, the customs, and the arts of every people and of every age. Late in life, he accidentally became the possessor of a considerable fortune; and, having decided that this work of his life should be a public inheritance, he seemed at a loss where it might at once rest in security, and lie patent for the world. The idea of its dispersion was very painful; for he was aware that the singleness of design which had assembled such various matters together could never be resumed by another. He often regretted, that, in the great national repository of literature, the collection would merge into the universal mass. It was about this time that we visited together the great library of Oxford. Douce contemplated in the Bodleian that arch over which is placed the portrait of SELDEN, and the library of Selden preserved entire; the antiquary's closet, which holds the great topographical collections of Gough; and the distinct shelves dedicated to the small Shakespearian library of MALONE. He observed that the collections of Rawlinson, of Tanner, and of others, had preserved their identity by their separation. This was the subject of our conversation. At this moment, Douce must have decided on the locality where his precious collection was to find a perpetual abode; for it was immediately on his return home that our literary antiquary bequeathed his collection to the Bodleian Library, where it now occupies more than one apartment.

To the anxious cares of such founders of public collections, England, as well as Italy and France, owes a national debt; nor can we pass over in silence the man to whom first occurred

the happy idea of instituting a library which should have for its owners his own fellow-citizens. A Florentine merchant, emancipated from the thraldom of traffic, vowed himself to the pursuits of literature, and, just before the art of printing was practised, to the preservation of manuscripts, which he not only multiplied by his unwearied hand, but was the first of that race of critics who amended the texts of the early copyists. What he could not purchase, his pure zeal was not the less solicitous to preserve. Boccaccio had bequeathed his own library to a convent in Florence, and its sight produced that effect on him which the library of Shakespeare, had it been preserved, might have had on an Englishman; and, since he could not possess it, he built an apartment solely to preserve it distinct from any other collection.

At a period when the owners of manuscripts were so avaricious of their possessions that they refused their loan, and were frugal even in allowing a sight of their leaves, the hardy generosity of this Florentine merchant conceived one of the most important designs for the interests of learning: to invite readers, he bequeathed his own as A PUBLIC LIBRARY.* He, who occupied but a private station, first offered Europe a model of patriotic greatness which princes and nobles in their magnificence would emulate. It has been said that the founder of this public library at Florence had only revived the noble design of the ancients, who had displayed their affection for literature by even bestowing their own names on public libraries: but this must not detract from the true glory of the merchant of Florence; it was at least an idea which had wholly escaped the less liberal of his learned contemporaries.

Sir THOMAS BODLEY may be considered as the first founder of a public library in this country, raised by the hand of an individual. A picture of the obstructions, the anxieties, the

* Tiraboschi, vi. pt. i. 181.

hopes, and the disappointments of the founder of the Bodleian, exhibits a person of rank and opulence submitting even to minute drudgery, and to the most humiliating solicitations, and busily occupied by a foreign as well as a domestic correspondence, to accomplish what he long despaired of, — a library adequate to the wants of every English student.

Bodley, in the sketch of his own life, betrays that early book-love which subsequently broke out into that noble passion for "his reverend mother, the University of Oxford." Sir Thomas Bodley had ably served in some of the highest state employments, but at length discovered the secret pathway to escape from "court contentions;" and this he found when busying himself with a vast ideal library, — the future Bodleian! Long, indeed, it was but ideal; — the labor of his day, the dream of his night, so slowly rose the reality of the fabric. It was difficult to determine on the class or the worth of authors, — often rejecting, always augmenting, still consulting, now advising, or being advised; sometimes irresolute and at others decisive; now exulting, and now despondent. However fervid was his noble enthusiasm for literature and for his library, not less remarkable was that provident sagacity which he combined with it, and by which only he could carry on the vast design.

What were the emotions of Bodley through this long period, what his first intentions, and what his immutable decision, have fortunately been laid open to us in a close correspondence with his first librarian. Our parent-founder of a public library, with the forcible simplicity of the natural colloquial style of that day, has developed his own character. "Examining exactly for the rest of my life what course I might take, and having sought, as I thought, all the ways to the wood, to select the most proper, I concluded, at the last, to set up my staff at the library-door in Oxon; being thoroughly persuaded, that, in my solitude and surcease from the commonwealth affairs, I could not busy myself to better pur-

pose." He early discovered that the formation of his library required the co-operation of many favorable circumstances: "Some kind of knowledge, some purse-ability, great store of honorable friends; else it would prove a vain attempt and inconsiderate." After many perplexities, the great resolve seemed to sanction the act; and he exclaims, "The project is cast; and, whether I live or die, to such ends altogether I address my thoughts and deed Such was the solemn pledge, and such the deed of gift- nich Bodley, in the greatness of his mind, contracted wi terity.

But the minor cares and the inuter anxieties were to open on him; and it must be conf ed that he tried the patient duties of the learned Dr. nes, whom he had judiciously elected for the first lil , but who often vents a groan on his interminable Sir Thomas gently reproaches him: "I am toiled e ngly, no less than yourself, with writing, buying, binding, disposing, &c.; but I am fed with pleasure of seeing the end." Bodley had not only to form a universal library, but to build one on the desolate ruins of that founded by Duke Humphrey, whose royal name could not save his books and manuscripts, which had all been purloined and wasted. The pledges left for their loan not being worth half the value of the books, the volumes were never returned; and those which remained in the reign of Edward the Sixth were burned as "superstitious," for their rubrics and illuminations. The history of this library might have deterred our new founder, by reminding him of the fate which may await even on public libraries. At all events, for many years it required all his fortitude to encounter a rabble of master-carpenters, joiners, carvers, glaziers, builders, claspers, and stringers, and the chain-smiths; for, at that day, books were chained to their shelves, with chains long enough to reach the desk. A book was tethered, and could never stray from its paddock. Then came the classification and the arrangements! discussions not easily to be adjusted with his

librarian, whether a book should be classed as a work of theology or of politics. Sir Thomas found an incessant business at London in packing up "dry fats," or vats of books, barging them for Oxford: he was receiving fresh supplies from Italy, from Spain, from Turkey; and designed to send a scholar to travel in the East, to collect Arabic and Persian books, on which he sagaciously observed, that "in process of time, by the extraordinary diligence of some one student, these eastern languages may be readily understood." Bodley anticipated our Society for Oriental Literature.

But, not merely solicitous to erect a vast library, Bodley was equally anxious to consecrate the spot to study itself. He is uneasy at too public an admission, lest idlers should mix among the students, and, as he plainly tells, "be daily pestering the room with their gazing and babbling, and trampling up and down, disturbing the real studious." With what fervor he rejoices, when, at length, he lived to witness the day of the opening of the library, and found that "all proceeded orderly, and with such silence"! But, although he had bestowed all his cares and his fortune on this institution, it still was but an infant; and he had to look towards spirits as enlarged as his own to protect the orphan of the public. It met with some who adopted it, and Bodley had their names inscribed in the register of this public library: but he was as cautious as he was courteous; the vain were not to be gratified for penurious gifts. Books, and not names, were wanted. At first, impatiently zealous, he murmurs of "promises received for performances." But latterly he had occasion to exhort the university to mark by their particular acknowledgments the donations in volumes or in money. The honorable roll on which the names are inscribed includes not only those of the most eminent of our country, but also of several ladies, who rivalled those heroes and statesmen who had the honor of laying the foundation of the Bodleian Library.*

* See Gutch's edition of Wood's "Annals of the University of Oxford," vol. i. pt. ii. p. 928.

In Sir Thomas Bodley's character we view the conscious dignity of a great design, yet combined with the sedate reflection of a man practised in the world. There were certain traits of vanity, which may give a color to the insinuations of some, — who might consider they had been deprived of legacies, — that it was his enormous vanity which raised this edifice of learning. It is amusing to discover, that, when the Bishop of Exeter proposed to he library, a letter of Sir Thomas immediately precedes isitor. "I pray you, observe his speeches, and liki iking; and, in your next, let me know it." When J... First was preparing to visit the library, he furnished l to the librarian for his speech to the literary monarch: must not carry greater length than for half a quarte an hour's utterance. It must be short and sweet, and of stuff." The librarian was desirous to hide Buchanan the king came down to Oxford; but Bodley, probably not approving the concealment of any of his literary stores, observed, "It will not avail to conceal him in his desk, since he is in the catalogue; nor have we any reason to take any notice of the king's dislike; but," he warily adds, "should it excite his majesty's notice, we must allege that the books were put there in the queen's time." But nothing save the most delicate attention towards an author could have prompted his order concerning Coryat the traveller, who had presented his book to the library. On the author's coming to Oxford, Sir Thomas desired that "it should be placed in such a manner, that, when the author came down, it may seem to magnify the author and the book." In his ardor for the general interests of his library, Bodley absolutely insisted that his librarian should persevere in his forlorn fellowship; for "marriage," opined the founder of the Bodleian Library, "is too full of domestic impeachments to afford him so much time from his private affairs." The doctor decided against the celibacy of a librarian, and was gravely admonished on the absurdity of such conduct in one who had

the care of a public library! for "it was opening a gap to disorder hereafter." With a happier prescience, Bodley foresaw that race of generous spirits, who long after, and at distant intervals, have carried on his great views. Listen to the simplicity and force of the venerable style of our first founder of a PUBLIC LIBRARY:—

"We cannot but presume, that, casting (counting) what number of noble benefactors have already concurred in a FERVOR OF AFFECTION to that PUBLIC PLACE OF STUDY, we shall be sure in TIME TO COME to find some OTHERS OF THE LIKE DISPOSITION to the advancement of learning."*

With such a hallowed purpose ever before him, can we conceive the agonies of the founder of a public library, on being for ever denied an entrance into it? and yet such was the fate of one of the most illustrious of this race. The mournful history of the founder of the Cottonian Library will ever excite the regrets of a grateful posterity, and its catastrophe will witness how far above life he loved and valued his collected lore. It happened, that, among the many rare manuscripts collected by Sir ROBERT COTTON, one reached his hands, which struck him by the singularity of the subject: it was a political theory, to show the kings of England "how to bridle the impertinency of parliaments." An unfaithful amanuensis, the son of the Dr. James whom we have just noticed, took copies, and sold them to the curious. When the original was at length traced to the Cottonian collection, Sir Robert was sued in the star-chamber, and considered as the author of a work whose tendency was to enslave the nation. It was long afterwards discovered, that this manu-

* The vigilant curiosity of Tom Hearne, the antiquary, collected the singular correspondence of the Founder of the Bodleian Library with Dr. James, the first librarian, and published it under the title of "Reliquiæ Bodleianæ, or Some Genuine Remains of Sir Thomas Bodley," 1703, 8vo. The curious reader will find in Gutch's edition of Wood's "Annals of the University of Oxford" many letters by Bodley, and his liberal endowments to provide a fixed revenue after his decease.

script had been originally written by Sir Robert Dudley, when in exile at Florence. Cotton was now denied all access to his library; his spirits sunk in the blackest melancholy; and he declared to an intimate friend, that "those who had locked up his library from him had broken his heart." Now deprived of that learned crowd who once were flowing into his house, consulting and arranging his precious manuscripts; torn away from the delightful business of his life, and in torment at the doubtful fate of that manuscript collection, which had consumed forty years, at every personal sacrifice, to form it for the "use and service of posterity,"—he sunk at the sudden stroke. In the course of a few weeks, he was so worn by injured feelings, that, from a ruddy-complexioned man, "his face was wholly changed into a grim blackish paleness, near to the resemblance and hue of a dead visage." Such is the expression of one who knew him well. Before he died, Sir Robert requested the learned Spelman to acquaint the Privy Council, that "their so long detaining his books from him had been the cause of his mortal malady." "On this message," says the writer of a manuscript letter of the day, "the Lord Privy Seal came to Sir Robert, when it was too late to comfort him, from the king; from whom also the Earl of Dorset came within half an hour of Sir Robert's death, to condole with Sir Thomas Cotton, his son, for his father's death; and, with an assurance that as his majesty loved his father, so he would continue his love to him: Sir Robert hath entailed his library of books as sure as he can make it upon his son and his posterity. If Sir Robert's heart could be ripped up, his library would appear in it, as Calais in Queen Mary's." Such is the affecting fate of the founder of the Cottonian Library,—that great individual, whose sole labor silently formed our national antiquities, and endowed his country with this wealth of manuscripts.

EARLY WRITERS, — THEIR DREAD OF THE PRESS; THE TRANSITION TO AUTHORS BY PROFESSION.

At the close of the reign of Elizabeth, the public, awakening at the first dawn of knowledge, with their stirring passions and their eager curiosity, found their wants supplied by a new race of "ready writers," who now teased the groaning press, — a diversified race of miscellaneous writers, who had discovered the wants of the people for books which excited their sympathies and reflected their experience, and who caught on their fugitive pages the manners and the passions of their contemporaries. No subject was too mean to be treated; and, had domestic encyclopædias been then invented, these would have been precisely the library the people required: but now every book was to be separately worked. The indiscriminate curiosity of an uneducated people was gratified by immature knowledge; but it was essential to amuse as well as to inform: hence that multitude of fugitive subjects. The mart of literature opened; and with the book-manufactory, in the language of that primeval critic, Webbe, of innumerable sorts of English books, and infinite fardles of printed pamphlets, "all shops were stuffed."

It has been attempted to fix on the name of that great patriarch, the Abraham of our Israel, who first invented our own book-craft; but it would be indiscreet to assign the honor to any particular person, or even to inquire whether the cupidity of the book-vender first set to work the ingenuity of the book-weaver. Who first dipped his silver pen into

his golde ink, and who first conceived the notion of this literary alchemy, which transmutes paper into gold or lead? It was, I believe, no solitary invention: the rush of "authors by profession" was simultaneous.

Former writers had fearfully courted fame; they were the children of the pleasures of the pen: these were a hardier race, who at once seized on popularity; and a new trade was opened by the arts of author In the primitive age of publication, before there exist reading public," literary productions were often anon ; or, which answered the same purpose, they wore th of a fictitious name, and were pseudonymous; or they themselves under naked initials, by which means the have sometimes lost their own property. It seems a , that writers should take such great pains to defraud es of their claims.

This coyness of prevalent among our earliest writers, when writing shing were not yet almost synonymous terms. Before we had "authors by profession," we had authors who wrote, and seemed to avoid every sort of publicity. To the secluded writers of that day, the press was arrayed with terrors which have ceased to haunt those who are familiar with its daily labors; and our primeval writers trembled before that halo of immortality which seemed to hang over that ponderous machinery. Writers eagerly affixed their names to polemical tracts, or to devotional effusions, during the melancholy reigns of EDWARD the Sixth and MARY, as a record of their zeal, and sometimes as an evidence of their voluntary martyrdom; but the productions of imagination and genius were yet rare and private. The noble-minded hardly ventured out of the halcyon state of manuscript to be tossed about in open sea: it would have been compromising their dignity, or disturbing their repose, to submit themselves to the cavils of the cynics; for, even at this early period of printed books, we find that the ancient family of the *Malevoli*, whom Terence has noticed, had sur-

vived the fall of Rome, and here did not find their "occupation gone." With many scholars, too, it was still doubtful whether the vernacular Muses in verse and prose were not trivial and homely. In the inchoate state of our literature, some who were imbued with classical studies might have felt their misgivings, in looking over their "gorgeous inventions" or their "pretty devices," as betraying undisciplined strength, bewildering fancies, and unformed tastes. They were not aware, even at that more advanced period, when a series of "poetical collections" appeared, of what they had already done; and it has been recently discovered, that, when the printer of "England's Helicon" had innocently affixed the names of some writers to their pieces, to quiet their alarms he was driven to the clumsy expedient of pasting slips of paper over their names. This was a spell which Time only dissolved, — that great revealer of secrets more deeply concealed.

When publication appeared thus terrible, an art which was not yet valued even the artists themselves would slight. We have a striking instance of this feeling in the circumstance of a sonnet of our Maiden Queen on the conspiracies then hatching by the party of her royal sister of Scotland. One of the ladies of her bedchamber had surreptitiously transcribed the poem from her majesty's tablet, and the innocent criminal had thereby cast herself into extreme peril. The queen affected, or at least expressed, her royal anger lest the people should imagine that she was busied in "such toys;" and her majesty was fearful of being considered too lightly of for so doing. The grave sonnet might, however, have been accepted as a state-paper. The solemn theme, the grandeur of the queenly personages, and the fortunes of two great nations at issue, communicated to these verses the profound emotions of contemplative royalty, more exquisite than the poetry. Yet Elizabeth could be checked by "the fear to be held too lightly by such toys."

The same motive had influenced some of the great personages in our literature, who, by the suppression of their names, anxiously eluded public observation, at the very moment they were in reality courting it! *Ignoto* and *Immerito*, or bare initials, were the concealing signatures of Rawleigh, of Sidney, and of Spenser. The works of the Earl of Surrey, then the finest poems in the language, were posthumous. "The Arcadia" of Sidney possibly was never intended for the press. The noble Sackville, who planned the grand poem of "the Mirror of Magistrates," [illegible]ly left his lofty "Induction" anonymous among the c[illegible]l. In the first poetical miscellany in our language, colle[illegible]l by the printer Tottell, are "the Poems of *uncert*[illegible]*r;*" so careless were the writers themselves to pr[illegible]ir names, and so little aware of having claims o[illegible] Some years after, when those other poetical [illegible]s, he Paradise of Dainty Devices" and "England's Helicon," were projected by their publishers, they were borrowed or stolen from manuscripts which lay neglected with their authors, and who for the most part conceal themselves under quaint signatures.

The metropolis, in the days of Elizabeth and James, bore a pretty close resemblance to those ancient cities now existing before us on the Continent, famous in their day, but which, from causes not here necessary to specify, have not grown with the growth of time. Cologne, Coblentz, and Mayence, are such cities; and the city of Rouen, in its more ancient site, exhibits a picture of the streets of London in the days of Shakespeare. Stationary in their limits and their population, the classes of society are more distinctly marked out; but the individual lives more constantly under the survey of his neighbors. Their art of living is to live in the public eye; to keep up appearances, however this pride may prove inconvenient. No one would seem to have an established household, or always care to indicate its locality: their meals are at a public table, and their familiar acquaintance are found

in the same public resorts; their social life becomes contracted as their own ancient narrow streets.

Such was London, when the Strand was a suburb, with only a few scattered mansions: the present streets still retain the family names, thus separating London from its regal sister. The glory of the goldsmiths and the mercers blazed in Cheapside, "the beauty of London;" and Fleet Street was the Bond Street of fashionable loungers. In this contracted sphere, where all moved, and the observers had microscopical eyes, any trivial novelty was strangely magnified, and the great personage was an object for their scrutiny as well as the least considerable. Thus we find that the Lord Chancellor Bacon is censured by one of the gossiping pens of that day for his inordinate pride and pomp on the most ordinary occasions. He went in his state robes "to cheapen and buy silks and velvets at Sir Baptist Hicker's and Burner's shops." James the First, I think, once in Parliament alluded to the "goldsmiths at Cheap, who showed not the bravery of former days," as a mark of the decline of national prosperity. One of the popular alarms of that day was "the rising of the apprentices," whenever the city's clumsy "watch and ward" were put to the rout: the apprentices usually made an attempt on their abhorrence, Bridewell; or pulled down two or three houses on Shrove-Tuesday. Once, on the trying of some ordnance in Moorfields, the court was seized by a panic of "a rising in the city." From all this we may form some notion of the size of the metropolis, and its imbecile police. In a vast and flourishing metropolis, the individual in liberty and security passes among the countless waves of this ocean of men.

A metropolis thus rising from its contracted infancy, extending in growth, and diversified by new classes of society, presented many novelties in its crowded scenes, — mutable manners, humorous personages, all the affectations or the homeliness of its citizens. Many writers, among whom were

some of admirable genius, devoted their pens to fugitive objects and evanescent scenes, sure of finding an immediate reception from the sympathy of their readers. New modes of life, and altered manners during a lengthened peace, brought men into closer observation of each other: the ranks in society were no longer insulated; their haunts were the same localities, — the play-house, the ordinary, and Paul's Walk. There we find the gay and the grave, — the disbanded captain; the critic from the inns of court; fantastic "fashion-mongers;" the cony-catcher, who watches "the warren;" and the gull, "town or country," — a term which, unlike that of "the cony-catcher," has survived the times before us, and is embedded in the language.* They even touched on the verge of that last refinement in society, — critical coteries. We learn from Jonson that there was "a college of critics," where a new member, "if he could pay for their suppers," might abuse the works of any man, and purchase for himself "the terrible name of a critic;" and ladies "lived free from their husbands," held coteries, and "gave entertainments to all the wits." This was the incipient state of the new world of manners, and what we now call "society;" and society provokes satire!

It was at the close of the Elizabethan period that our first town-satirists arose, from whom we learn the complicate system of manners, in the artifices practised in society; and, in

* This technical term, designating the class of youthful loungers, was a new term in 1596, when Sir John Davis wrote his "Epigrams:" —

> "Oft in my laughing rimes I name a GULL;
> But this *new terme* will many questions breed:
> Therefore, at first, I will expresse at full
> Who is a true and perfect Gull indeed."

His delineation is admirable: Gifford, in his "Jonson," quotes it at length, — i. 14. But whoever may be curious about these masculine "birds" will be initated into the mysteries of "Gullery" by "the Gulls' Horn-book" of DECKER, of which we have a beautiful edition, with appropriate embellishments, by Dr. Nott.

looking on their phantasmagorias, we are often startled among their grotesque forms by discovering our own exact faces. Satires on manners, descriptive of the lighter follies and the more involved artifices of social life, could hitherto have had no scope. The great in station alone constituted what may be considered as society, without any of those marking differences resulting from the inequalities of fortune. Satire then, as with Skelton, was an invective discharged at some potent individual at the risk of life; or it was an attack on a whole body, as Piers Ploughman's on the clergy of the times, while Will or John or Piers, whatever was his name, hid himself behind a hedge on Malvern Hills. Society, in the modern acceptation of a miscellaneous mixture, which equalizes men even in their inequality, supplying passing objects for raillery or indignation, opened that wider stage, which a growing metropolis only could exhibit. We must become intimate with men to sound even the depths of superficial follies, and declamation may even fall short in the conception of some enormous criminal. Society must have considerably advanced before a town-satirist could appear.

The change in style was not less remarkable than that in manners. Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, after the wild luxuriance of fancy which had everywhere covered the fresh soil of the public mind, in the riot of our genius, a great change was occurring in the minds of our writers. Nature, in her open paths of sunshine, no longer busied them, while they stole into the by-corners of abstract ideas, and roved after glittering conceits. Philosophy introduced itself into poetry, and wit became the substitute for passion. It was then that Sir John Davies wrote his "Immortality of the Soul," which still remains a model of didactic verse; and Donne, "the Progress of the Soul,"—a progress which he did not venture to conclude; a poem the most creative and eccentric in the language, but which must be reserved for

the few. Donne, who closed his life as a St. Austin, had opened it as a Catullus.

The depth of sentiment was contracted into sententious epigrams, alike in prose and verse; and, in the display of their ingenuity, the remotest objects were brought into collision, and the most differing things into a strange coherence, to startle by surprises and to make us admire these wonders by their novelty. ast ab hem their pointed antitheses, and often s a of similar syllables, and the clinch of an w

In all matters ed phrases; and it has been observed, th le was barbarously elliptical. They ffecting brevity of words, which was pigrammatic. It became fashionable to ed books of "Epigrams" and books ppear to have taken their notion of an epigram from the eek anthology, where the term was confined to any inscription for a statue or a tomb, or any object to be commemorated. Modern literature, in adopting the term, has applied it to a different purpose from its original signification. An epigram now is a short satire closing with a point of wit. Wit, in our present sense, was yet unpractised; and the modern epigram was not yet discovered. Ben Jonson has composed books of epigrams; but, though he has censured Sir John Harrington's as not being epigrams, but mere narratives, has written himself in the prevalent style of his day. They are short poems on persons, and on incidents in his own life, which he poured out to relieve his own feelings when they were outraged; and, so far, they are a reflection of the poet's state of mind, — the autobiography of his potent intellect. As among these epigrammatists we never had a Martial, so among these character-writers we could hardly expect a La Bruyère for his refined causticity; but the most skilful, as Sir Thomas

Overbury and Bishop Earle, are so witty as to seem grotesque, but it is human nature disguised in the fashions of the day.*

This infection of style must have come from a higher source than a mere fashionable affectation of the day; for it endured through half a century. The axiomatic style of Bacon in his "Essaies," which first appeared in 1597, probably set the model of the curt period for these Senecas in prose and verse, who found no difficulty in putting together short sentences, without, however, having discovered the art of short thoughts.

This change in style is considered as characteristic of the age of James; but it began before his reign. The age of this monarch has been universally condemned as the age of pedantry, and of quibbles and conceits, all which, indeed, have been liberally ascribed to his taste; but, in the plentiful evidence of his wit and humor, it would be difficult to find an instance of these bastard ornaments of style.

In the history of literature, the names of sovereigns usually only serve to mark its dates; and an "author-sovereign," to use Lord Shaftesbury's emphatic expression, can exercise no prerogative, and yields even his precedence. In more than one respect, JAMES THE FIRST may form an exception; for the barren list of his writings alone might serve to indicate the age: their subjects were not so peculiar to this monarch's taste as they were common with higher geniuses than his majesty.

When, on the throne of England, it was deemed advisable to collect his majesty's writings, the honor of the editorship was conferred on Montague, Bishop of Winton, whom Fuller has characterized as "a potent courtier;" and the courtly potency of the prelatical editor effuses itself before the "majesty of kings" in the most awful of all prefaces.

* Dr. Bliss has given an excellent edition of Bishop Earle's "Microcosmography: or, A Piece of the World discovered in Essays and Characters."

Cavillers there were, who, on distinct principles, objected to a king being a writer of books, carrying on war "by the pen instead of the pike, and spending his passion on paper instead of powder." This was a military cry from those whose "occupation had long gone." Others, more critically nice, assumed, that, "since writing of books had grown into a trade, it was as discreditable for a king to become an author as it would be for him to be a practitioner in a profession." Such objectors were not difficult to put down; and the bishop has furnished an ample catalogue of "royal authors" among all great nations, and, in our own, from Alfred to Elizabeth. The royal family of James were particularly distinguished for their literary acquiremer As that was the day when no argument could be urged mt standing by the side of some authority, the bisho e well, and no scholar in an upper class could have done ler: but this bishop was imprudent; his restless courtliness fatigued his pen till he found a *divine origin of king-writing!* "The majesty of kings," he asserts, "is not unsuited to a writer of books;" and proceeds, "*The first royal author* is the King of kings,—God himself, who doth so many things for our imitation. It pleased his divine wisdom to be *the first in this rank*, that we read of, that did *ever write*. He wrote on the tables on both sides, which was the work of God." This was in the miserable strain of those unnatural thoughts and remote analogies which were long to disfigure the compositions even of our scholars. How James and the bishop looked on one another at their first meeting, after this preface was fairly read, one would like to learn; but here we have the age!

One work by this royal author must not pass away with the others: it is not only stamped with the idiosyncrasy of the author, but it is one of those original effusions which are precious to the history of man. "THE BASILICON DORON, or His Majesty's Instructions to His Dearest Son Henry the Prince," is a genuine composition in the vernacular

idiom; not the prescribed labor of a secretary, nor the artificial composition of the salaried literary man, but warm with the personal emotions of the royal author. He writes for the Prince of Scotland, and about the Scottish people: he instructs the prince even by his own errors and misfortunes. Some might be surprised to find the king strenuously warning the prince against pedantry; exhorting his pupil to avoid what he calls any "corrupt leide, as book-language and pen-and-ink terms;" counselling him *to write in his own language*, "for it best becometh a king to purify and make famous his own tongue." To have ventured on so complete an emancipation from the prevalent prejudices, in the creation of a vernacular literature, is one evidence, among many, that this royal author was not a mere pedant; and the truth is, that his writings on popular subjects are colloquially unostentatious, abstaining from those oratorical periods and rhetorical fancies which the scholar indulged in his speeches and proclamations, — the more solemn labors of his own hand.

It is due to the literary character of James the First to notice his prompt sympathies with the productions of genius. This monarch had not exceeded his twentieth year when we find him in an intercourse with men of letters and science at home and abroad. The death of Sidney called forth an elegiac poem, and the works of the astronomer Tycho Brahe are adorned by a poetical tribute from the royal hand: during the winter the king passed in Denmark, he was a frequent visitor of the philosopher, on whom he conferred an honor and a privilege. That he addressed a letter to Shakespeare, grateful for the compliments received in "Macbeth," there is little reason to doubt; for Davenant, the possessor of the letter, which was finally lost, told it to the Duke of Buckingham; few traditions are so clearly traced to their source: and indeed some mark of James's attention to Shakespeare is positively told by Ben Jonson in his elegy on "the Swan of Avon:" —

"What a sight it were
To see thee on our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and OUR JAMES!" *

Hooker was the favorite vernacular author of James; and his earliest inquiry, on his arrival in England, was after Hooker, whose death he deplored. James wrote a congratulatory letter to Lord on his work: the king at least bowed to the genius of the man. was by the especial command of this royal "pedant," nty-four years after the publication of Fairfax's "Tasso, hat a second edition revived that version; and he provi Herbert the poet with a sinecure or pension, that his Muse ght cease to be disturbed. James the First was not only t tron of Ben Jonson, but admitted the bard to a liter ourse; and it is probable that we owe to those confere e of the splendor of the Masques, and in which there are many strokes of the familiar acquaintance of the poet with his royal admirer. More grave and important objects sometimes engaged his attention. It was James the First who assigned to the learned Usher the task of unfolding the antiquities of the British churches; and it was under the protection of this monarch that Father Paul composed the famous history, which, as fast as it was written, was despatched to England by our ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton; and, in this country, this great history was first published. These are not the only testimonies of his strong affection for literature and literary men; but they may surprise some who only hear of a pedant-king, who in reality was only a "learned" one.

* Every atom of candor is to be grudged to this hapless monarch: it is lamentable to see such a writer as Mr. Hallam prompt instantly to confirm a mere suggestion of Mr. Collier, that James could never have written a letter to Shakespeare, incapacitated to sympathize with the genial effusions of our poet.

THE AGE OF DOCTRINES.

We now leave the age of Imagination for the age of Doctrines: we have entered into another reign; and a new epoch arises in our literature, our tastes, and our manners.

We turn from the noble wrestlings of power, the stirrings of adventure, and the commanding genius of the Maiden Queen, to the uninterrupted level of a long protracted tranquillity; a fat soil, where all flourished to the eye, while it grew into rankness, and an atmosphere of corruption, breeding, in its unnatural heat, clouds of insects. A monarch arrived in the flush of new dominion with a small people, who, as an honest soul among them said, "having been forty years in the desert, were rushing to take possession of the promised land." All was to be the festival of an unbroken repose, — a court of shows and sports, the rejoicings of three kingdoms.

But the queen, with these dominions, had bequeathed her successor two troublesome legacies, in two redoubtable portions of the English public: both the Romanists, and those numerous dissenters emphatically called Puritans, were looking up to the new monarch, while the "true Protestants of Elizabeth" closed not their eyes in watchfulness over both papist and presbyter.

To the monarch from the Kirk of Scotland, which he had extolled for "the sincerest kirk in the world," as suited a Scottish sovereign, and who had once glanced with a presbyter's eye on "an evil mass in England," the English bishops hastened to offer the loyalty of their church. His more ancient acquaintance, the Puritans, were not behind the bish-

ops, nor without hope, to settle what they held to be "the purity" of church discipline: but James had drunk large draughts of a Scottish presbytery, and knew what lay at the bottom; he had tasted the dregs. He did not like the Puritans, and he told them why: to unking and to unbishop was "the parity" of their petty model of Geneva. The new monarch declared, perhaps he would not otherwise have been received, that "he came to maintain what the queen had established," — he demanded from the Puritans conformity to the State, and probably little imagining that they preferred martyrdom. James lived to see when silencing, ejecting, and expatiating ended in more conformity than the common sufferings of the party.*

The claims of the Romanists were more tender than those of the sons of John Knox who prayed only for a toleration. The monarch delayed what he refused not concede. He is charged by the nonconformist with being "very charitable" to these votaries of an indefeasible right of monarchy, and his project of "meeting them half-way" startled the English Protestant. What does the king mean? Are our doctrines the same? Are we to return to the confessional? purchase plenary pardons? require absolution and the salvation of souls from the Bishop of Rome?

The main objection of the king himself to what he styled "the corruption of the mother-church" was the papal supremacy, and its pretended power of deposing monarchs, or of granting a dispensation for their murder. Here the popular patriot exclaimed, "Was the great revolution of civil liberty made only for the prince's safety?" Whatever might be this revery of a coalition with Rome, Rome for ever baffled it by the never-ceasing principle of her one and indivisible divine autocracy. "The celestial court," omnipotent and omniscient, hurled its bolt at the pacific heretic of England.

* James granted to the Puritans the public discussion then prayed for, — the famous conference at Hampton Court.

It menaced his title, while its priests busily inculcated that "any thing may be done against heretics, because they are worse than Turks and Infidels:" then barrels of gunpowder were placed under his throne, and the papal breves equally shook his dominion by absolving the Romanists of England from their oath of allegiance. The English monarch chose to be the advocate of his own cause, to vindicate his regal rights, and to protest before all Europe against this monstrous usurpation. He wrote "the Apology for the Oath of Allegiance;" and we must concede to his tract this merit, that, if the cause were small, boundless and enduring was the effect. In every country in Europe, through all the ranks of the learned, and for many a year, this effusion of James occupied the pens alike of the advocates of the apostolical court, and of the promulgators of the emancipation of mankind;* nor is it remotely connected with the noble genius of Paul Sarpi, whose great work was first published in London, and patronized by the English monarch.

It was on a nation divided into unequal parts of irreconcilable opinions that James conferred the dubious blessing of a long peace: for twenty years there were no wars but the battle of pens, and the long artillery of a hundred volumes.

Polemical studies become political when the heads of parties mask themselves under some particular doctrine. Opinion only can neutralize opinion: but, in the age of doctrines before us, authority was considered stronger than opinion; and, in their unsettled notions and contested principles, each party seemed to itself impregnable. Every Æneas brandished his weapon, but could never wound the flitting chimeras. It was in the spirit of the age that Dr. Sutcliffe, the Dean of Exeter, laid the foundations of a college for controversies or disputations at Chelsea, on the banks of the quiet Thames. In this institution, the provost and

* A curious list of some of the more remarkable controversialists on both sides may be found in Irving's "Lives of the Scottish Poets," ii. 234.

the fellows were unceasingly to answer the Romanist and the Mar-Prelate. The fervent dean scraped together all his properties in many an odd shape to endow it, obtained a charter, and obscured his own name by calling it "King James's College." He lived to see a small building begun, but which, like the controversies, was not to be finished. A college for controversy verily required inexhaustible funds. When the day arrived that those became the masters whom those dogmatists had so constantly refuted, the controversial college was oddly changed into a manufactory of leather-guns, which probably were not more efficacious.

James ascended the English throne as a poor man comes to a large inheritance. In securing peace, he deemed he had granted the people all they desired; and he was the only monarch who cast a generous thought on their social recreations. That image of peace and of delight was to be reflected in the court: and, in that enchanted circle of flattery and of hope, the silvery voices of his silken parasites told how "he gave like a king;" but he himself, a man of simple habits, with an utter carelessness of money, learned a lesson which he never rightly comprehended how an exchequer might be voided.

James was a polemical monarch when polemics were political. But what creed or system did this royal polemic wholly adopt? Born of Roman-Catholic parents, and not abhorrent to the mother-church, for the childhood of antiquity had its charms for him; brought up among the Scottish Presbyterians, with whom he served a long accommodating apprenticeship of royalty, and, with the doctrines of the Anglican Church, become the sovereign of three realms, — did James, like his brother of France, modify his creed, for a crown, by the state-religion?

Behold this luckless philosopher on the throne closing the last accompts of his royalty with nothing but zeros in his own favor! By Puritans hated, by Romanists misliked, and

surrounded by trains of the "blue-bonnets," who were acted on the stage, and balladed in the streets; little gracious with his English subjects, to whom, from the first, "the coming-in" seemed as much like an invasion as an accession; never forgiven by the foreigner for his insular genius, whose pacific policy refused to enter into a project of visionary conquest; and finally falling into a new age, when the monarch, reduced to a mere metaphysical abstraction, whose prerogative and privilege were alike indefinite, had to wrestle with "the five hundred kings," as James once called the Commons, — deservedly or undeservedly, this monarch for all parties was a convenient subject for panegyric or for libel, true or false.

But, in reality, what was the character of James the First? Where shall we find it?*

* I have at least honestly attempted "An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James the First."

PAMPHLETS.

PAMPHLETS, those leaves of the hour, and volumes of a season, and even of a week, slight and evanescent things as they appear, and scorned at by opposite parties, while each cherishes their own, are in truth the re ords of the public mind, the secret history of a people which does not always appear in the more open narrative: the tru bent and temper of the times, the contending interests. ppeal of a party, or the voice of the nation, are nowh ividly brought before us as by these advocates of the cause, too deeply interested to disguise their designs, and too contracted in their space to omit their essential points.

Of all the nations of Europe, our country first offered a rapid succession of these busy records of men's thoughts, their contending interests, their mightier passions, their aspirations, and sometimes even their follies. Wherever pamphlets abound, there is freedom; and therefore have we been a nation of pamphleteers. Even at the time when the press was not yet free, an invincible pamphlet struck a terror; the establishment of the Anglican Church under Elizabeth disturbed the little synagogue of Puritans, and provoked the fury of the Mar-Prelate pamphlets; the pacific reign of James covered the land with a new harvest of agricultural pamphlets: but when we entered on an age when men thought what they listed, and wrote what they thought, pamphlets ran through the land, and then the philosophical speculator on human affairs read what had never before been written; the troubles of Charles the First and the nation sounded the

trumpet of civil war by the blast of pamphlets; state-plots and state-cabals were hatched at least by the press, under the second Charles, and popery and arbitrary government terrified the nation by their pamphlets; the principles of English government and toleration expanded in the pamphlets of the reign of William the Third; even Locke's Treatises on Toleration and on Government were at first but pamphlets; and, under Anne, the nation observed the light skirmishes of Whig and Tory pamphlets.

Our neighbors, in their great revolutionary agitation, if they could not comprehend our constitution, imitated our arts of insurgency, and, from the same impulses, at length rivalled us: but the very term of *pamphlet* is English; and the practice seemed to them so novel, that a recent French biographer designates an early period of the French Revolution as one when "the art of PAMPHLETS had not yet reached perfection."

The history of pamphlets would form an extraordinary history; but whoever gathers a history from pamphlets must prepare for contradiction. Rushworth had formed a great collection to supply the materials of his volumes, but speaks slightly of them, while insinuating his own sagacity in separating truth from falsehood; but he concluded "very suspiciously," observed Oldys, that none need trouble themselves with any further examination than what he had been pleased to make. This suspicion was more manifest when Nalson began another collection from pamphlets to shake the evidence of the pamphlets of Rushworth. Each had found what he craved for: for whoever will look only into those on his favorite side finds enough written with his own passions, but he will obtain little extension of knowledge; for this is much like looking at his own face in the glass.

But we must not consider pamphlets wholly in a political view: their circuit is boundless, holding all the world of man; they enter into every object of human interest. The silent revolutions in manners, language, habits, are there to be

traced: the interest which was taken on novel objects of discovery would be wholly lost, were it not for these records; and, indeed, it is the multiplicity of pamphlets on a particular topic or object which appear at a particular period that offer the truest picture of public opinion.

Those who would not dare to compose a volume have fluttered in the leaves of a pamphlet. Three or four ideas are a good stock to set up a pamphlet, and look well in it, as picked wares in a shop-window. The mute, who cannot speak at a dinner or on the hustings, is eloquent in a pamphlet; and he who speaks only to excite the murmurs of his auditors amply vindicates himself by a pamphlet. I doubt whether there is a single important subject to which some English pamphlet may not form a necessary supplement. Many eminent in rank, or who, from their position have never written anything else, have written a pamphlet; and as the motive must be urgent which induces any such to have recourse to their pen, so the matter is of deeper interest; and it has often happened that the public have thence derived information which else had not reached them. The heads of parties have sometimes issued these manifestoes; and the tails, in the form of a pamphlet, have sometimes let out secrets for which they have been reprimanded.

Some of the most original conceptions, whose very errors or peculiarities even may instruct, lie hidden in pamphlets. These effusions of a more permanent nature than those of politics are usually literary, scientific, or artistical, the spontaneous productions of amateurs; the precious suggestions, and sometimes the original discoveries, of taste or enthusiasm. These are the *deliciæ* of the amenities of literature; and such pamphlets have often escaped our notice, since their writers were not authors, and had no works of their own among which to shelter them.

The age of Charles the First may be characterized as the age of pamphlets. Of that remarkable period, we possess an

extraordinary collection, which amounts to about thirty thousand pieces, uniformly bound in two thousand volumes of various sizes, accompanied by twelve folio volumes of the catalogue, chronologically arranged, exhibiting their full titles. Even the date of the day is noted when each pamphlet was published. It includes a hundred in manuscript written on the king's side, which at the time were not allowed to be printed. The formation of this collection is a romantic incident in the annals of bibliography.

In that critical year, 1640, a bookseller of the name of Thomason conceived the idea of preserving, in that new age of contested principles, an unbroken chain of men's arguments and men's doings. We may suppose that this collector, commencing with the year 1640, and continuing without omission or interruption to the year 1660, could not at first have imagined the vast career he had to run: there was, perhaps, sagacity in the first thought; but there was far more intrepidity in never relinquishing this favorite object during these perilous twenty years, amid a conflict of costly expenditure, of personal danger, and almost insurmountable difficulties.

The design was carried on in secrecy through confidential servants, who at first buried the volumes as they collected them; but they soon became too numerous for such a mode of concealment. The owner, dreading that the ruling government would seize on the collection, watched the movements of the army of the Commonwealth, and carried this itinerant library in every opposite direction. Many were its removals, northward or westward; but the danger became so great, and the collection so bulky, that he had at one time an intention to pass them over into Holland, but feared to trust his treasure to the waves. He at length determined to place them in his warehouses, in the form of tables round the room, covered with canvas. It is evident that the loyalty of the man had rendered him a suspected person: for he was once dragged from his bed, and imprisoned for seven weeks; during

which time however, the collection suffered no interruption, nor was the secret betrayed.

The secret was, however, evidently not unknown to some faithful servants of the king; for when, in 1647, his majesty at Hampton Court desired to see a particular pamphlet, it was obtained for him from this collection, though the collector was somewhat chary of the loan, fearing the loss of what he felt as a limb of his body, not probably recoverable. The king had the volume with him in his flight towards the Isle of Wight; but it was returned to the owner, with his majesty's earnest exhortation that he should diligently continue the collection. A slight accident happened to the volume occasioned the collector to leave an interesting incident on record.*

* In vol. 100, small quarto, we find the following memorandum:—

"Mem'dum that Col[l] Will Legg and Arthur Treavor were employed by his Majes[e] K. Ch. to gett for his [illegible] a pamphl[t] which his majestie had then occasion to make use of, & not meeting with it, they both come to me, having heard that I did employ myself to rake up all such things from the beginning of that Parliament, and finding it with me, told me it was for his majestys own use. I told them all I had were at his maj[y] command and service, & withal told them if I should part with it & loose it — presuming that when his majestie had done with it, that little account would be made of it, and that if I should loose it, by that loss a limb of my collection, which I should be very loath to see, well knowing it would be impossible to supplie it if it should happen to be lost; with which answer they returned to his majes[e] at Hampton C[t] (as I take it) & tould him they had found the person which had it, & withal how loath he that had it was to part with it, he much fearing its loss. Whereupon they came to me again from his maj[e] to tell me that upon the word of a king (to use the king's own expressions) they would safely return it, whereupon immediately by them I sent it to his majestie. Who having done with it, & having it with him when he was going towards the Isle of Wight, let it fall in the *durt*, and then calling for the two persons (who attended him) delivered it to them with a charge as they would answer it another day, that they should both speedily & safely return it to him from whom they had received it, and withal to desire the party to go on & continue what had begun. Which book, together with his Maj[ties] signification to me, by these worthy and faithful gents, I received both speedily and safely. My volume hath that mark of honour which no other volume in my collection hath, & v[y] diligently and carefully I continued the same until that

When Cromwell ruled, a place of greater security was sought for than the owner's warehouses: a fictitious sale was made to the University of Oxford, who would be more able to struggle for their preservation than a private individual, if the protector discovered and claimed these distracted documents of the history of his own times.

Mr. Thomason lived to complete his design: he witnessed the restoration, and died in 1666, leaving his important collection, which was still lodged at Oxford, and which he describes in his will "as not to be paralleled," in trust to be sold for the benefit of his children. His will affords an evidence that he was a person of warm patriotic feelings, with a singular turn of mind; for he left a stipend of forty shillings for two sermons to be annually preached, one of which was to commemorate the destruction of the Armada.

The collection continued at Oxford many years, awaiting a purchaser;* and at length appears to have been bought by Mearne, "the king's stationer," at the command of the Secretary of State for Charles the Second: but Charles, who would little value old pamphlets, and more particularly these, which only reminded him of such mortifying occurrences, by an order in council in 1684 munificently allowed the widow of Mearne to dispose of them as well as she could. In 1709 we find them offered to Lord Weymouth,† and in 1732 they were

most hapie restoration & coronation of his most gratious majestie King Charle y^e^ 2d, whom God long preserve. "GEO. THOMASON."

The volume bears the "honours" of its mischance. There are a great number of stains on the edges of the leaves, — some more than an inch in depth. The accident must have happened on the road in the king's flight, from the marks of the mud.

* In 1676, Dr. Barlow, one of the trustees, writes to the Rev. George Thomason, who was a fellow of Queen's College and the eldest son of the collector, respecting the collection and its value. The letter is printed in Beloe's "Anecdotes of Literature," vol. ii.

† A letter from Dr. Jenkin, who was chaplain to Lord Weymouth, to Mr. Baker, Dec. 3, 1709: "There is another rarity then to be sold, which is proffered to my lord, — a collection of pamphlets, in number 30,000, bound in

still undis ɔsed of; but in those times of loyal rebellion, either for the assumption or the restoration of the throne, that of the commonwealth excited so little interest, and this extraordinary collection was so depreciated, that Oldys then considered it would not reach the twentieth part of the four thousand pounds which it was said that the collector had once refused for it.* In 1745 a representative of the Mearne Family still held the volumes;† and eventually they were purchased at the small price of three or four hundred pounds by George the Third, and by him were presented to the national library, where they now bear the name of the King's Pamphlets.

Thus having escaped from seizure and dispersion, this noble collection remained in the hands of those who priced it as a valueless encumbrance, and yet seemed to have respected the

2,000 volumes. The collection was begun by Charles First in 1640, and continued to 1660. In a printed paper, where I saw this account, it is said the collectors refused £4,000 for them." — *Masters's Life of Rev. Thomas Baker*, p. 28.

* "Phœnix Britannicus," — "Oldys's Dissertation upon Pamphlets," p. 556. Oldys drew up an account of these pamphlets from "the Memoirs of the Curious," published in 1701. He says that the collection was made by *Tomlinson, the bookseller;* and the catalogue by Marmaduke Foster, the auctioneer; and relates a traditional story, that it is reported that Charles the First gave ten pounds for reading one of these pamphlets, at the owner's house in St. Paul's Churchyard. This collection was not commenced until November, 1640; and the king left London in January, 1642: during this time the collection could not be very numerous, nor would there be that difficulty in seeing a pamphlet as at the subsequent more distracted period. It is curious to trace the origin of traditionary tales: they often stand on a rickety foundation. We find that the king did borrow a pamphlet, but at a time when he could not hasten to St. Paul's Churchyard to read it: we may presume that the bookseller did not charge his majesty so disloyal a price as ten pounds for the perusal of a single pamphlet; he probably received only the king's approbation of his design, which doubtless was no slight stimulus to its completion.

† A Mr. Sisson, a druggist in Ludgate Street, who died in 1749: they then became the property of his relative, Miss Sisson, who seems gladly to have disburdened herself of this domestic grievance in 1761. — *Hollis's Memoirs*, p. 121.



object of the enterprise; for they preserved it entire. It may be some consolation to such intrepid collectors, that their intelligence and their fervor are not in vain; and, however they may fail in the attainment of their motive, a great end may fortunately be achieved.

THE "OCEANA" OF HARRINGTON.

THE hardy paradoxes, not wholly without foundation, and the humiliating truths so mortifying to human nature, of the mighty "Leviathan," whose author was little disposed to flatter or to elevate his brothers,* were opposed by an ideal government, more generous in its sympathies, and less obtrusive of brute force or "the public sword," in the "OCEANA" of JAMES HARRINGTON.

Free from mere party motives, neither the Monarchist or the Commonwealth-man, for he gratified neither, Harrington was the greatest of political theorists; and his "political architecture," with all his "models of government, notional and practicable," still remains for us, and has not been overlooked by some framers of constitutions.

The psychological history of HARRINGTON combines with his works. His was a thoughtful youth, like that of Sidney, of Milton, and Gray, which never needed correction, but rather kept those around him in awe. Among the usual studies of his age, it was an enterprise to have acquired the modern languages, as entering into an extensive plan of foreign travel, which the boy had already decided on. The death of his father before his legal age enabled him to realize this project. Political studies, however, had not yet occurred to him; and, when he left England, he "knew no more of monarchy, anarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, or oligarchy, than

* I must refer the reader for the development of the system of Hobbes to the Essay on Hobbes in the "Quarrels of Authors" (last edition, p. 436).

as hard words for which he was obliged to look into the dictionary."

In Holland he first contemplated on the image of popular liberty, recent from the yoke of Spain: it was a young people rejoicing in the holiday of freedom. There he found a friend in the fugitive Queen of Bohemia: his uncle, Lord Harrington, had been the governor of that spirited princess. He passed over into Denmark with the crownless elector, soliciting for that aid which no political prudence could afford. He resisted the seductions of those noble friendships in pursuit of his great plan. He entered France, he loitered in Germany, and at length advanced into Italy. At Rome, he refused to bestow on his holiness the prostrate salutation; and when some Englishmen complained of their compatriot's stiffness to Charles the First, who reminded the young philosopher that he might have performed a courteous custom as to a temporal prince, the reply was happy: "Having kissed his majesty's hand, he would always hold it beneath him to kiss any prince's toe."

Our future political theorist was deeply struck in his admiration of the aristocratic government of Venice, which he conceived to be the most perfect and durable government hitherto planned by the wit of man. Such was the prevalent notion throughout Europe concerning a government existing in secrecy and mystery! In Italy he found politics, literature, and art; and provided himself with a rich store of Italian books, especially on political topics. Machiavelli with him was "the prince of politicians;" but he has opened his great work with the name of another Italian, "Janotti (Giannotti), the most excellent describer of the Commonwealth of Venice." Giannotti is a name, which, though it has not shared the celebrity of Machiavelli, seems to have been that of a more practical politician; for Giannotti at length obtained that honorable secretaryship of Florence, the loss of which, it is said, so deeply mortified the lofty spirit of his greater rival, that the

illustrious ex-secretary died of grief, which his philosophy should have quieted.

Harrington returned home an accomplished cavalier; but the commonwealth of Holland, the aristocracy of Venice, the absolute monarchy of France, imperial Germany, and what else he had contemplated in the Northern courts, must have furnished to his thoughtful mind the elements of his theory of politics.

He returned home to the privacy of his studies, refusing any public employment; but that he kept up an intercourse with the court, appears by his personal acquaintance with the king. Many years form a blank in his life: once, indeed, he had made an ineffectual attempt to enter parliament, but failed, though his sentiments were well known in favor of popular government. It is probable, that in that unhappy period, when persons and events were alike of so mixed and ambiguous a character, our philosopher could not sympathize with the clash of temporary passions.

When the king was to be conveyed from Newcastle in 1646, Harrington was chosen to attend his person, as "a gentleman well known to the king before, and who had never engaged with any party whatever." He was then in his thirty-fifth year.

This appointment of Harrington was agreeable to the king. Charles found in Harrington the character he well knew how to appreciate. He conversed on books and pictures and foreign affairs, and found a ripe scholar, a travelled mind, and a genius overflowing with strange speculative notions. Their conversations were free: Harrington did not conceal his predilection for commonwealth institutions, at which the king was impatient. Neither could bring the other to his own side; for each was fixed in taking opposite views, — the one looking to the advantages of monarchy, and the other to those of a republic. The only subject they could differ on never interrupted their affections: the theoretical commonwealth-

man and the practical monarch, in their daily intercourse, found that they had a heart for each other.

In Charles the First, Harrington discovered a personage unlike the distorted image which political passions had long held out. In adversity, the softened prince seemed only to be "the man of sorrows." On one occasion, Harrington vindicated the king's conduct, and urged that the royal concessions were satisfactory. This strong personal attachment to Charles alarmed the party in power. Harrington was ordered away. He subsequently visited the king when at St. James's, and was present at the awful act of the decapitation. Charles presented Harrington with a last memorial. Aubrey, who knew Harrington, may tell the rest of his story: "Mr. Harrington was on the scaffold with the king when he was beheaded: and I have ofttimes heard him speak of King Charles the First with the greatest zeal and passion imaginable; and that his death gave him so great grief, that he contracted a disease by it; that never any thing did go so near to him."

The agony of that terrible day afflicted Harrington with a malady from which he was never afterwards freed: a profound melancholy preyed upon his spirits; he withdrew into utter seclusion, not to mourn, but to despond. His friends were alarmed at a hermit's melancholy: some imagined that his affection for the king had deranged his intellect; others ascribed his seclusion to mere discontent with the times.

To rid himself of friendly importunities, and to evince that his mind was not deranged, whatever might be his feelings, he confided to his circle that he had long been occupied in the study of civil government, to invent an art which should prevent the disorders of a state. It was his opinion, that "a government is not of so accidental or arbitrary institution as people imagine; for in society there are natural causes producing their necessary effects as well as in the earth or the air." The passionless sage was so discriminately just, that he declared that "our late troubles were not wholly to be

ascribed to the misgovernment of the prince, nor to the stubbornness of the people, but to the nature of certain changes which had happened to the nation." He then, for their curious admiration, disclosed the perfect model of a commonwealth in his "OCEANA."

OCEANA, or England, was the model of "a free state:" a political "equality" was its basis, — equality to be guarded by a number of devices. Harrington laid the foundation of politics, on the principle that *empire follows the balance of property*, whether lodged in one, in a few, or in many. Toland asserts that this was as noble a discovery as that of the circulation of the blood, of printing, gunpowder, or the compass, or optic glasses: the Newtonian gravity had not then been established, or doubtless it had been enumerated.

To preserve the political equality, there were to be "balances" in dominion and in property. An agrarian law, by its distributions suitable to the rank of the individual, and which were never to be enlarged nor diminished, would prevent any man, or any party, overpowering the people by their possessions. All those states in Europe which were the remains of Gothic dominion were thrown into internal conflicts by their "overbalances." The overbalance of one man was tyranny; of a few, was oligarchy; of the many, was rebellion, or anarchy.* The perpetual shifting of their "balances" had produced all their disturbances. He traced this history in extinct governments as well as in our own. So refined were his political optics, that he discerned when our kings had broken Magna Charta some thirty times; and, during the reign of Charles the First, he asserts that these "balances" had been altered nine times.

The "balance of property" being the foundation of the

* The masterpiece of legislation of Abbé Sieyes, who, during the French Revolution, had always a new constitution in his pocket, was founded on this principle of "checks and balances in the state," evidently adopted from Harrington. In Scott's "Life of Napoleon," vol. iv., the Abbé Sieyes' system is described.

commonwealth, the superstructure was raised of magistracy. Magistracy was to proceed by "rotation," and to be settled by the "ballot." The senate was to be elected by the purity of suffrage, which was to be found in the balloting-box; and, in this rotatory government, the third part of the senate would be wheeled out at their fixed terms. The senate by these self-purgations would renovate its youth; and the sovereign authority, by this unceasing movement, would act in its perpetual integrity.

In this equal commonwealth, no party can be at variance with or gain ground upon another; and as there can be no factions, so neither will there be any seditions; because the people are without the power or the interest to raise commotions: they would be as likely to throw themselves into the sea as to disturb the state. It is one of his political axioms, that, where the public interest governs, it is a government of laws; but, where a private interest, it is a government of men, and not of laws.

HARRINGTON was no admirer of a mixed monarchy: his political logic includes some important truths. "In a mixed monarchy, the nobility sometimes imposing chains on the king or domineering over the people, the king is either oppressing the people without control, or contending with the nobility, as their protectors; and the people are frequently in arms against both king and nobles, till at last one of the three estates becomes master of the other two, or till they so mutually weaken one another, that either they fall a prey to some more potent government, or naturally grow into a commonwealth, — therefore mixed monarchy is not a perfect government; but, if no such parties can possibly exist in OCEANA, then it is the most equal, perfect, and immortal commonwealth. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*"

The "equality" of Harrington, however, was not fashioned to any vulgar notions of a levelling democracy. He maintained the distinctions of orders in society. The great

founder of a commonwealth was first a *gentleman*, from Moses downwards: though, he says, "there be great divines, poets, lawyers, great men in all professions, the genius of a great politician is peculiar to *the genius of a gentleman*." And further: "An army may as well consist of soldiers without officers, or of officers without soldiers, as a commonwealth (especially such an one as is capable of greatness) consist of a people without gentry, or of a gentry without a people."

A work of such original invention, replete with the most curious developments of all former political institutions, of which the author proposed to resume the advantages and to supply the deficiencies, from the ancient commonwealth of Moses to the recent republic of the Hollanders, and moreover throwing out some novel general views of our own national history, formed a volume opportune to engage public attention. It was enlivened by the pleasing form of a romance, where, in the council of the legislators, the debaters plead for their favorite form of government with infinite spirit.

The publication of "Oceana" was, however, long retarded: first, by the honesty of our sage; and, secondly, by the influence of two very opposite parties equally alarmed. Harrington was anxious that his proselytes should debate his opinions, and even partially promulgate them in their pamphlets, before he ventured to publish them. What he ably elucidated they faithfully repeated: the consequence of this indiscretion was, that the novelty had lost its gloss; and, when finally his great discovery of empire following the balance of property appeared, the author was reproached for its obviousness. Every great principle appears obvious when once ascertained. The vague rumors that had spread, that a new model of government was about to appear, made the Cromwellites and the cavaliers alike alert in their opposition: the bashaws of the great sultan, the new lords and major-generals of the Protector, sate uneasy in their usurped seats: the cavaliers, who knew Harrington's predisposition for re-

publican institutions, loudly remonstrated. The author was compelled to send his papers to the printers by stealth and by snatches, dispersing them among different presses. The first edition of "Oceana" exhibits a strange appearance in a confusion of all sorts of types and characters, — black letter, Italian and Roman, accompanied by an unparalleled "List of Errors of the Press," being several folio pages with double columns! The author has even marked the lacerations of his panting and hunted volume from "a spaniel questing who hath sprung my book out of one press into two other." The myrmidons of Oliver hunted down their game from press to press, and at length pounced on their prey, and, with a Pyrrhic triumph, bore it to Whitehall.

All solicitations of the author to retrieve his endeared volume proved fruitless: in despair, he ventured on a singular expedient. Lady Claypole, the daughter of the Protector, studied to be exceedingly gracious, and to play the princess. Unacquainted with her ladyship, Harrington requested an audience. Waiting in the antechamber, her little daughter soon attracted his attention: carrying her in his arms, he entered the presence-chamber, and declared that he had a design to steal the young lady, — not from love, but for revenge.

"Have I injured you?"

"Not at all! but your father has stolen my child, and then you would have interceded for its restoration."

The parable of the parental author was easily explained: the pleasing manners of the elegant cavalier, which were not commonly seen in the new court of the protectorate, doubtless assisted the petitioner with the recent princess of the revolution. "Are you sure," she earnestly inquired, "that your book contains nothing against my father's government?"

"It is a political romance! to be dedicated to your father, and the first copy to be opened by yourself."

Lady Claypole conceived there could not be any treason in a romance. She persuaded Oliver to look it over himself:

the Protector, who there found himself as "the Lord Archon of Oceana," and probably with his sharp judgment deeming the whole "a romance," returned it; dryly observing, that "the power which he had got by the sword he would not quit for a little paper-shot:" but he added, with his accustomed sanctimonious policy, that "he as little approved as the gentleman of the government of a *single person*, but that he had been compelled to take the office of High-Constable to preserve the peace among all parties who could never agree among themselves."

"Oceana" was published at a crisis when the people were still to be enchanted by the name of "Commonwealth;" though they began to think that they had been mistaken in their choice, since their grievances had been heavier than under the old monarchy which they had dissolved. Harrington familiarly compared their present unquiet state to that of a company of puppy-dogs cramped up in a bag, when, finding themselves ill at ease for want of room, every one of them bites the tail or the foot of his neighbor, supposing that to be the source of his misery. To such a restless people, a continual change of rulers on the rotatory system seemed a great relief: any worse than their present masters they would not suppose. "The Rota" of Harrington became so popular, that a club was established bearing its name; and they held their debates every evening, with doors open for auditors or orators.

This political club was the resort of the finest geniuses of the age, many of whom have left their eminent names in our history and our literature. The members sat at a circular table, — the table of ancient knighthood and modern equality, which left a passage open within its circuit to have their coffee delivered hot, without any interruption to the speaker or "the state of the nation." A contemporary assures us that these debates were more ingenious and spirited than he had ever heard, and that those in parliament were flat to them. Every decision how affairs should be carried was left to the balloting-

box, — "a box in which there is no cogging," observes the master-genius of "the Rota."

This "balloting" and the principle of "rotation" were hateful to the parliamentarians; for, as we are told, "they were cursed tyrants, in love with their power, and this was death to them." HENRY NEVILLE, the author of "Plato Redivivus," the constant associate of Harrington, and who, Hobbes (alluding to the "Oceana") said, "had a finger in the pie," had the boldness to propose the system of "rotation" to the House; warning them, that, if they did not accept that model of government, they would shortly fall into ruins. In their then ticklish condition, the House had the decency to return their thanks, and the intrepidity to keep their places.

This perfectioned model of a government, when opened for the inspection of mankind, exhibited a glorious framework: but it seemed questionable whether this political clockwork or intellectual mechanism could perform its exact librations, depending on a number of "balances" to preserve its nice equilibrium; and whether it could last for perpetuity by that "rotatory" motion by wheels which were never to cease. Some objected, that the author in the science of politics had been fascinated, as some in mechanics, who imagined that they had discovered "the perpetual motion." But this objection the constructor of this "political architecture" indignantly rejected. He knew that the capacity of matter can only work as long as it lasts, and therefore there can be no perpetual motion; but "the mathematician must not take God to be such as he is. The equal commonwealth is built up by the understandings of the people. Now, the people never die: they are not brute matter. This movement of theirs comes from the hands of the Eternal Mover, — even God himself."

This romance of politics has been pronounced by a high authority as "one of the boasts of English literature;" and the philosophic Hume has even ventured to pronounce the work as "the *only valuable model of a commonwealth* that has

yet been offered to the public." Perhaps the historian would pass it off as "the only valuable one," from a conviction that it was perfectly harmless. It is worthy of remark, that when, in 1688, a grand *auto da fé* was performed by the University of Oxford on certain political works, — when they condemned to the flames Baxter's "Holy Commonwealth," written against Harrington's "Heathen Com[illegible]ealth," as Baxter calls "Oceana," with Hobbes and [illegible]on and others, — no one proposed this condign punishm[illegible] the manes of Harrington; considering, no doubt, that a re[illegible]ice was too impracticable as a political system. Yet the [illegible]publican party has always held to "Oceana" as their te[illegible]ok; and it was with this view that TOLAND edited this g[illegible] work, and, in his Life of Milton, has declared "Oceana[illegible] be an unrivalled model of a commonwealth, for its *[illegible]bleness, equality*, and completeness; and once HOLLI[illegible]; the fervor of founding a republic in Corsica, recommen[illegible] by public advertisement "Oceana" as the most perfect model of a free government.

"OCEANA" has perpetuated a thoughtful politician's dreams. But are there no realities in dreams? Even in dreaming, a great artist often combines conceptions too fugitive, too mysterious, too beauteous, for his palpable canvas. And thus the fanciful pictures of our philosophical politician were the results of his deep and varied studies in the ancient and modern writings on the science of politics, — from Aristotle to Machiavel, from Machiavel to Hobbes. His pages are studded with axioms of policy, and impress us by many an enduring truth. His style is not always polished, and is sometimes perplexed: but no writer has exceeded him in the felicity and boldness of his phrases; and his pen, though busied on higher matters, sparkles with imagery and illustration.

That a mind so sagacious and even predictive as was that of Harrington's in the uncertainty of human events should be led away by theoretical fallacies, is an useful example for

political speculators.* Constantly he extols the dark mysterious dominion of aristocratic Venice, "being a commonwealth having no causes of dissolution." He dwells on "the rotation of its senate," and its prompt, remedial, concealed power. "It is immortal in its nature, and to this day she stands with one thousand years of tranquillity on her back; notwithstanding," he thoughtfully adds, "that this government consists of men not without sin."

A single day of treason sufficed to terminate this immortal commonwealth of Venice, with all its "ballotings" and "its rotations," and its hidden and horrible dictature, where sate the council of "Three" in their dark conclave, like the sister-fates, the arbiters of every soul in Venice. Alas for that folly of the wise, who, in the delusion of a theory, to support the edifice of imagination, disguise the truths which might shake it! The advocate of a free state, he who pretends to draw sovereignty from the hands of a people, is the perpetual eulogist of the most refined tyranny that ever swayed the destiny of a people. Spirit of Harrington! meditate in thy sepulchral city, motionless and naked as she lies, there to correct so many passages of admiration which spread their illusion in thy "OCEANA"!

Harrington was equally fallible on the strength of his political axiom, "that the balance of power depends on that

* I think that Harrington presciently detected the latent causes of a great revolution in France. The curiosity of the passage may compensate for its length:—

"Where there is tumbling and tossing upon the bed of sickness, it must end in death or recovery. Though the people of the world, in the dregs of the Gothic Empire, be yet tumbling and tossing upon the bed of sickness, they cannot die; nor is there any means of recovery for them but by ancient prudence: whence, of necessity, it must come to pass that this drug be better known. If *France*, *Italy*, and *Spain* were not all sick, all corrupted together, there would be none of them so; for the sick would not be able to withstand the sound, nor the sound to preserve their health without curing of the sick. *The first of these nations, which, if you stay her leisure, will, in my mind, be France*, that recovers the health of ancient prudence, shall certainly *govern the world*." — *Oceana*, p. 168; edition 1771.

of property:" applying it to his own critical period, he pronounced that it was impossible ever to re-establish monarchy among English commonwealth-men. Property had changed possessors: it could never revert to its former owners. Four years after "Oceana" was published, and "the Rota Club" was still illumining the nation, the commonwealth returned to monarchy by a beck, and without a word!

Theoretical politicians too often omit, in their artificial constructions and their moral calculations, something more prompt to act in the conduct of men than even their interests, — the stirring passions of ambition, of faction, and the vacillations of "the sovereign people," now maddening for a republic, now rushing into a monarchy, "tumbling and tossing upon their bed of sickness."

When the Restoration arrived, however it may have deranged the system, it seems not to have disturbed the systematizer. He observed, that "the king comes in: if he calls a parliament of the cavaliers on our great estates, let them sit seven years, and they will all turn commonwealth-men." He retained in all its force his master-passion of ideal politics. He now decided to reduce "Oceana" into plain axioms, divested of tedious argumentation and formal demonstration, adapted to the most vulgar capacities. He was easily induced to offer some immediate instructions for the king's service. A paper was first shown to some of the courtiers, who suspected treason in any scheme where their particular interests were not at all consulted. One morning, when Harrington was busily engaged, with all his aphorisms lying loose on a table before him, suddenly entered Sir William Poulteney and other officers to seize on the philosopher and the philosophy "for treasonable designs and practices." As they were huddling together the scattered members of the "Oceanic" mind, the innocent philosopher, innocent of treason, begged the favor of "stitching them together" before they were

taken to Whitehall. The derangement of his system appeared to him more dreadful than seeing himself hurried to the Tower.

Harrington had kept up his intimacy with old friends, among whom were many commonwealth-men, from Major Wildman, an intriguing Cromwellite, down to the notorious Barebones; on whom he declared, however, that he had only called "at his shop" thrice in his life. He was now involved in a pretended plot, which the chancellor himself, though furnished with accounts of the meetings of certain parties, declared that he could make nothing of. A speculative politician was a very suspicious person in the days of restoration. Harrington, assuredly, was no plotter. Our philosopher contrived to send his sisters his examination before his relative Lord Lauderdale and others, curious for its topics of discussion, and the poignancy of the dialogue. I cannot pass by one singular passage:—

"You charge me with being eminent in principles contrary to the king's government and the laws of this nation. Some, my lord, say, that I, being a private man, have been so mad as to meddle with politics: what had a private man to do with government? My lord, there is not any *public* person, not any *magistrate*, that has written in politics, worth a button. All they that have been excellent in this way have been private men,—as private men as myself. There is Plato, there is Aristotle, there is Livy, there is Machiavel. My lord, I can sum up Aristotle's politics in a very few words: he says there is the barbarous monarchy, such a one where the people have no votes in making the laws; he says there is the heroic monarchy, such a one where the people have their votes in making the laws; and then he says there is democracy, and affirms that a man cannot be said to have liberty but in a democracy only."

My Lord Lauderdale, who thus far had been very attentive, at this showed some impatience.

Har. — "I say, Aristotle says so: I have not said so much. And under what prince was it? Was it not under Alexander, the greatest prince in the world? Did Alexander hang up Aristotle? did he molest him?" And he proceeds with Livy, who wrote under Cæsar, and the commonwealth-man, Machiavel, under the Medici, unmolested.

"I wrote under an usurper, er. He having started up into the throne, his officers kept a murmuring for a commonwealth. He told them that he knew not what they meant; but, let any one show him that there was any such thing as a commonwealth, they should see that he sought not himself: the Lord knew he only sought to make good the cause. Upon this, some sober men thought, that, if any in England could show what a commonwealth was, it was myself. I wrote; and, after I had written, Oliver never answered his officers as he had done before: therefore I wrote not against the king's government; and, if the law could have punished me, Oliver had done it; therefore my writing was not obnoxious to the law. After Oliver, the parliament said they were a commonwealth: I said they were not; and proved it, insomuch that the parliament accounted me a cavalier, and one that had no other design in my writing than to bring in the king; and now the king, first of any man, makes me a Roundhead!"

Certainly no theoretical politician has ever more lucidly set before us the cruel dilemmas of speculative science.

The story of HARRINGTON now becomes calamitous. In vain his sisters petitioned that the prisoner, for his justification, should be brought to trial: no one dared to present the petition to parliament. He was suddenly carried off to St. Nicholas Island, near Plymouth; and, by favor, afterwards was lodged in Plymouth Castle, where the governor treated the state-prisoner with the kindness he had long wanted. His health gradually gave way; his mind fell into disorder; his high spirit and his heated brain could not brook this tor-

menting durance; his intellect was at times clouded by some singular delusions; and his family imagined that it was intended that he should never more write "Oceanas." The physician of the castle had prescribed constant doses of guaiacum taken in coffee. At length, other physicians were despatched by his family: they found an emaciated patient deprived of sleep; and, under their hands, testified that the copious use of this deleterious beverage, with such drying drugs, was sufficient to occasion hypochondriasm, and even frenzy, in any one who had not even a predisposition. The surly physician of the state-prison insisted that Harrington counterfeited madness.

His delusions never left him; yet otherwise his faculties remained unaltered. He had strange fancies about the operations of the animal spirits, good and evil; and often alarmed his friends by his vivacious descriptions of these invisible agencies. "Nature," he said, "which works under a veil, is the heart of God." But how are we to account, in a mind otherwise sane, for his notion, that his thoughts transpired from him, and took the shapes of flies or bees? Aubrey has given a gossiper's account of this ludicrous hypochondriasm. Harrington had a summer-house revolving on a pivot, which he turned at will to face the sun: there sat the great author of "Oceana," whisking a fox's brush to disperse this annoyance of his transpired thoughts in the flies or bees; which whenever they issued from crevices, he would appeal to those present, whether it was not evident to them that they had emerged from his brain. An eminent physician had flattered himself that he would be able to out-reason this delusion by that force of argument and positive demonstration to which his illustrious patient only would attend; but the physician discovered that no argument could avail with the most invincible disputant in Europe. The sanity of the man only strengthened his insanity. Besides, our philosopher believed that he had discovered a new system of physiology in what

he called "the Mechanics of Nature." Harrington declared that his fate was that of Democritus, who, having made a great discovery in anatomy, was deemed mad by his associates, till Hippocrates appeared, and attested the glorious truth, confounding the laughers for ever! He now resolved to prove against his doctors, that his notions were not, as they alleged, [illegible] whim fanciful delusions. Among his manuscripts [illegible] found the promised treatise, thus opening: "Have [illegible] nine months, some say, in a disease, I in a cure, [illegible] been the wonder of physicians, and they mine!" It is much to be regretted that the first part of this singular design has only reached us, wherein he has laid down his axioms, many of which are indisputable, coherent, and philosophical, however critical might have been their application to his particular cases. The narrative of his own disorder, which would have been the second part, would have been a great psychological curiosity: for the philosopher was there to have told us how "he had felt and saw Nature; that is, how she came first into his senses, and by the senses into the understanding," and "to speak to men that have had the same sensations as himself." The logical deliriums of Harrington, it is not impossible, might have thrown a beam of light on "the Human Nature" of Hobbes and "the Understanding" of Locke.

It is for the medical character to develop the mysteries of this condition of man; but this moral phenomenon of the partial delusions of the noblest intellect remains an enigma they have not yet solved. Harrington never recovered his physical energy, while his "understanding" betrayed no symptoms of any decay in the exercise of his vigorous faculties.

There is one dark cloud which dusks the lustre of the name of HARRINGTON. Opening the volume of his works, we are startled by an elaborate treatise on "the Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy." It is not merely one of the most

eloquent invectives against monarchical institutions, but it overflows with the most withering defamations, such as were prevalent at that distempered season, when the popular writers accumulated horrors on the memories of their late sovereigns, to metamorphose their monarchs into monsters. In this terrible state-libel, all kings are anathematized: James the First was the murderer of his son; Charles the First was a parricide. Of that "resolute tyrant Charles," we have an allusion to "his actions of the day, his actions of the night;" from which we must infer that they were equally criminal.

The reader, already acquainted with the intimate intercourse of our author with Charles the First, and with all his permanent emotions, which probably induced his mental disorder, must start at the disparity of the writing with the writer. A thorough-paced partisan has here acted on the base principle of reviling the individual whom he privately acknowledged to be wholly of an opposite character. It would be a solecism in human nature, had Harrington sent forth an historical calumny, which only to have read must have inflicted a deep pang in his heart. He was a philosopher, who neither flattered nor vilified the prince nor the people: their common calamities he ascribes to inevitable causes, which had been long working those changes independent of either. In the reigns of James and Charles, according to his favorite principle, "the English Balance," in favor of "popularity," was "running like a bowl down hill." He does justice to the sagacity of the indolent James, who, he tells us, "not seldom prophesied sad things to his successors;" and of Charles the First, on succeeding to his father, Harrington has expressed himself with the utmost political wisdom, and felicity of illustration: "There remained nothing to the destruction of a monarchy, retaining but the name, more than a prince, who, by contending, should make the people to feel those advantages which they could not see.

And this ha pened to the next king (Charles), who, too secure in that undoubted right whereby he was advanced to the throne hich had no foundation, dared to put this to an unseasonable trial, on whom, therefore, fell the tower in Silo. Nor may we think they on whom this tower fell were sinners above all men; but that we, unless we repent and look better to the true foundations, must likewise perish."* All that our philosopher had to deliver to the world on the many contested points of that unhappy reign was the illustration of his principle, and not the infamy of vulgar calumny. With the philosophic Harrington, Charles the First was but "a doomed man;" not more a sinner, because the tower of Silo had fallen upon his head, than those who stood without. This was true philosophy: the other was faction.

The treatise on "the Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy," prominently placed at the opening of the works of Harrington, and inseparably combined with his opinions by the reference in the general index, — this treatise, which has settled like a gangrene on the fair character of the author of "Oceana," which has called down on his devoted head the execrations of honorable men,† and which has misled many generations of readers, is the composition of a salaried party writer, in no way connected with our author. Toland, the first editor of Harrington's works, introduced into the volume this anonymous invective, which has thus come down to us sanctioned by the philosopher's name. There was no plea of any connection between the two authors, and much less between their writings. The editor of the edition of 1771 has silently introduced the name of the real author in the table of contents, but without prefixing it to the tract, or without any further indication to inform the reader.

Whether zeal for "the cause" led Toland to this editorial

* The Art of Law-giving, 366, 4to edition.

† See the solemn denunciations of the "Biographia Britannica," p. 2536, which are repeated by later biographers; see Chalmers.



delinquency, or whether he fell into this inadvertence from deficient acumen, it remains a literary calamity not easily paralleled; for a great author is condemned for what he never could have written.

THE AUTHOR OF "THE GROUNDS AND REASONS OF MONARCHY."

THE author of "the Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy," whose historical libel is perpetuated in the works of Harrington, is JOHN HALL, of Gray's Inn, sometimes described of Durham; one of those fervid spirits who take the bent of the times in a revolutionary period. He must be classed among those precocious minds which astonish their contemporaries by acquisitions of knowledge, combined with the finest genius, and in their boyhood betray no immaturity. We may receive with some suspicion accounts of such gifted youths, though they come from competent judges; but when we are reminded of the Rowley of Chatterton, and find what HALL did, we must conclude that there are meteorous beings, whose eccentric orbits we know not how to describe. HALL, prevented by the civil wars from entering the university, pursued his studies in the privacy of the library at Durham. When the war ceased, he was admitted at Cambridge; and in 1646 published, in his nineteenth year, *Horæ Vacivæ*, or "Essays, with some Occasional Considerations." These are essays in prose; and, at a time when our literature could boast of none except the masterpieces of Lord Bacon, a boy of nineteen sends forth this extraordinary volume. Even our plain Anthony caught the rapture; for he describes its appearance, "the sudden breaking-forth of which amazed not only the university, but the more serious part of men in the three nations, when they (the Essays) were spread." Here is the

puerility of a genius of the first order! A boy's essays raised the admiration of "the three nations"! and they remain still remarkable! This youth seems to have modelled his manner on Bacon for the turn of his thoughts, and on Seneca for the point and sparkle of his periods. The dwarf rose strong as a giant.*

The boy, having astonished the world by a volume of his prose, amazed them in the succeeding year by a volume of his verse, poetry as graceful as the prose was nervous: his verses still adorn the most elegant of our modern anthologies.†

Attracted to the metropolis, he entered as a student at Gray's Inn; and there his political character soon assumed the supremacy over his literary. He sided with the independents, the ultra commonwealth-men; and satirized the presbyterians, the friends of monarchy. He plunged into extreme measures: courting his new masters by the baseness of a busy pen, he justified Barebones's parliament; got up a state-pamphlet against the Hollanders; proposed the reform of the universities, "to have the friar-like list of the fellowships *reduced*, and *the rest of the revenue* of the university *sequestered into the hands of the committee*," of which, probably, he might himself have been one. The exchequer was opened; he received "present sums of money;" and the council granted their scribe a considerable pension.

During this life of political activity, Hall, in 1650, was commanded by the council of state to repair to Scotland, to attend on Cromwell, for the purpose of settling affairs in favor of the commonwealth, and to wean the Scots from their lingering affection for the surviving Stuart. It was then that Hall, in his vocation, sent forth the thunder of a party-pamphlet,—"the Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy." This extraordinary tract consists of two parts: the first, more elaborately

* Three or four of these Essays have been reprinted in "the Restituta," vol. iii. The original book is very rare.

† See Ellis's "Specimens."

composed, as an argumentative exposition of anti-monarchical doctrines; in the second, to bring the business home to their bosoms, he offers a demonstration of his principles, in a review of the whole Scottish history, sarcastically reminding them of their kings "crowned with happy reigns, and quiet deaths (two successively scarce dying naturally)." It is a mass of invectives and calumnies in the disguise of grave history; and this historical libel, concocted for a particular time and a particular place, was eagerly received at Edinburgh, and immediately republished in London, where it was sure of as warm a reception.*

Hall's passion for literature must have been intense; for, amid these discordant days, he found time to glide into hours of refreshing studies. He gave us the first vernacular version of "the Sublime" of Longinus,† and left another of the moral Hierocles. This gifted youth with sportive facility turned English into Latin, or Latin into English: it has been recorded of him that he translated the greater part of a singular work of the alchemical Maier, in one afternoon, over his wine at a tavern; and he entranced the ear of that universal patron, Edward Bendlowes, by turning into Latin verse three hundred lines of his mystical poem of "Theophila," at one sitting.

In this impassioned existence, excited by the acrimony of politics and the enthusiasm of study, he fell into reckless dissipation, and undermined a constitution, which, probably, had all the delicacy and sensitiveness of his genius. He sunk in the struggle of celebrity and personal indulgence, and hastened

* I found the origin of this eloquent and factious performance in an account of JOHN HALL, prefixed to his translation of "Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras:" it proceeds from a friend, — John Davies of Kidwelly. The treatise of Hall, in its original edition, is so rare, that no copy has been found at the British Museum, nor in the King's Library: it was, however, reprinted at the time in London.

† "A piece of great learning, entitled 'the Height of Eloquence,' written in Greek, by Dionysius Longinus; rendered into English from the original, by John Hall, Esq., London, 1652, 8vo." — *Brüggeman's English Transactions.*

back to his family to die, when he had hardly attained to manhood.

A true prodigy of genius was this JOHN HALL; for not only he could warm into admiration our literary antiquary, but the greater philosopher Hobbes, not prone to flattery, has left a memorial of this impassioned and precocious being. "Had not his debauches and intemperance diverted him from the more severe studies, he had made an extraordinary person; for no man had ever done so great things at his age."

COMMONWEALTH.

WHEN the term COMMONWEAL[illegible] deeply occupied the minds of men, they had formed no s[illegible] notions about the thing itself: the term became equivo[illegible] of such wide signification that it was misunderstood and mi[illegible]plied, and always ambiguous; and a confusion of words l[illegible]any writers into a confusion of notions.

The term *Commonweal*, or [illegible]*h*, indeed, appears in our statutes, in the speeches of [illegible]archs, and in the political works of our writers, long b[illegible]e idea of a *republic*, in its popular sense, was promulgated by the votaries of democracy. The term *Commonweal* explains itself: it specifies no particular polity but the public weal; and even the term ***republic*** originally meant nothing more than *res publicæ*, or "the affairs of the public." Sir THOMAS SMITH, the learned secretary to Elizabeth, who has written on the English constitution, entitles his work, "the Commonwealth of England." James the First justly called himself "the great servant of the Commonwealth." The Commonwealth, meaning the kingdom of England, is the style of all the learned in law.

The ambiguity of the term *Commonwealth* soon caused it to be perverted by the advocates of popular government, who do not distinguish the State from the people: this appears as early as the days of Rawleigh, who tells us that "the government of all the common and baser sort is, by an ***usurped nickname***, called a COMMONWEALTH."*

* Rawleigh's "Remains."

It was in the revolutionary period of Charles the First that the terms *Commonwealth* and *Commonwealth-man* were adopted by the governing party, as precisely describing their purity of devotion to the public weal. In the temper of the times, the Commonwealth became opposed to the monarchy, and the Commonwealth-man to the royalist. Cromwell ironically asked what was a Commonwealth; affecting an ignorance of the term.

When Baxter wrote his "Holy Commonwealth" against Harrington's "Heathenish Commonwealth," he had said, "I plead the cause of monarchy as better than democracy or aristocracy." Toland, a Commonwealth-man in the new sense, referring to Baxter's work, exclaims that "a monarchy is an odd way of modelling a Commonwealth." Baxter alluded to an English Commonwealth in its primitive sense, and Toland restricted the term to its modern application. Indeed, Toland exults in the British constitution being a Commonwealth in the popular sense, in his preface to his edition of Harrington's works; and has the merit of bringing forward as his authority the royal name of James the First, and which afterwards seems to have struck Locke as so apposite, that he condescended to repeat it. The passage in Toland is curious: "It is undeniably manifest that the English government is *already a Commonwealth* the most free and best constituted in the world. This was *frankly* acknowledged by King James the First, who styled himself *the great servant of the Commonwealth.*" One hardly suspected a republican of gravely citing the authority of the royal sage on any position!

The Restoration made the term *Commonwealth-man* odious, as marking out a class of citizens in hostility to the government; and *Commonwealth* seems, in any sense, to have long continued such an offensive word, that it required the nicest delicacy to handle it. The use of the term has even drawn an apology from Locke himself, when writing on "government." "By Commonwealth," says our philosophical politi-

cian, "I must be understood all along to mean, *not a democracy*, but an independent community, which the Latins signified by *civitas;* to which the word which best answers in our language is *Commonwealth.*" However, Locke does not close his sentence without some trepidation for the use of an unequivocal term, obnoxious even under the new monarchy of the revolution. "To avoid ambiguity, I crave leave to use the word *Commonwealth* in that sense in which I find it *used by King James the First*, and I take it to be its genuine signification; which *if anybody dislike, I consent with him to change it for a better*"! An ample apology! but one which hardly suits the dignity of the philosophical writer.

THE TRUE INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSE.

It is only in the silence of seclusion that we should open the awful tome of "the True Intellectual System of the Universe" of Ralph Cudworth.* The history and the fate of this extraordinary result of human knowledge and of sublime metaphysics are not the least remarkable in the philosophy of bibliography.

The first intention of the author of this elaborate and singular work was a simple inquisition into the nature of that metaphysical necessity, or destiny, which has been introduced into the systems both of philosophy and religion, wherein man is left an irresponsible agent in his actions, and is nothing more than the blind instrument of inevitable events over which he holds no control.

This system of "necessity," or fate, our inquirer traced to three different systems, maintained on distinct principles. The ancient Democritic or atomical physiology endows inert matter with a motive power. It views a creation, and a continued creation, without a creator. The disciple of this system is as one who cannot read; who would only perceive lines and scratches in the fairest volume, while the more learned comprehend its large and legible characters: in the mighty volume of Nature, the *mind* discovers what the *sense* may not, and reads "those sensible delineations, by its own

* My copy is the folio volume of the first edition, 1678; but they have recently reprinted Cudworth at Oxford in four volumes.

inward activity," which wisdom and power have with their divinity written on every page. The absurd system of the atomist, or the mere materialist, Cudworth names the atheistic.

The second system of "necessity" is that of the theists, who conceive that the will of the Deity, producing in us good or evil, is determined by no immutability of goodness and justice, but an arbitrary will potent; and therefore all qualities, good and evil, are n y so by our own conventional notions, having no reality nature. And this, Cudworth calls *the divine fate*, or *immoral theism*, being a religion divesting the Creator of the intellectual and moral government of the universe; all just and unjust, according to this hypothesis, being mere factitious things. This "necessity" seems the predestination of Calvinism, with the immorality of Antinomianism.

The third sort of fatalists do not deny the moral attributes of the Deity, in his nature essentially benevolent and just; therefore there is an immutability in natural justice and morality, distinct from any law or arbitrary custom: but, as these theists are necessarians, the human being is incapacitated to receive praise or blame, rewards or punishments, or to become the object of retributive justice; whence they deduce their axiom, that nothing could possibly have been otherwise than it is.

To confute these three fatalisms, or false hypotheses of the system of the universe, Cudworth designed to dedicate three great works, — one against atheism, another against immoral theism, and the third against the theism whose doctrine was the inevitable "necessity" which determined all actions and events, and deprived man of his free agency.

These licentious systems were alike destructive of social virtues; and our ethical metaphysician sought to trace the Deity as an omnipotent understanding Being, a supreme Intelligence presiding over all, in his own nature unchangeable

and eternal, but granting to his creatures their choice of good and evil by an immutable morality. In the system of the visible and corporeal world, the sage contemplated on the mind which everywhere pervaded it; and his genius launched forth into the immensity of "the Intellectual System of the Universe."

In this comprehensive design, he maintains that the ancients had ever preserved the idea of one Supreme Being, distinct from all other gods. That multitude of pagan deities, poetical and political, were but the polyonomy, or the many names or attributes, of one God, in which the unity of the Divine Being was recognized. In the deified natures of things, the intelligent worshipped God, — the creator in the created. The pagan religion, however erroneous, was not altogether nonsensical, as the atheists would represent it.

In this folio of near a thousand pages, Cudworth opens the occult sources of remote antiquity; and all the knowledge which the most recondite records have transmitted are here largely dispersed. There is no theogony and no cosmogony which remains unexplored: the Chaldean oracles, and the Hermaic books, and the Trismegistic writings, are laid open for us; the arcane theology of the Egyptians is unveiled; and we may consult the Persian Zoroaster, the Grecian Orpheus, the mystical Pythagoras, and the allegorizing Plato. No poet was too imaginative, no sophist was too obscure, to be allowed to rest in the graves of their oblivion. All are here summoned to meet together, as at the last tribunal of their judgment-day. And they come with their own words on their lips, and they commune with us with their own voices, for this great magician of mind, who had penetrated into the recesses of mythic antiquity to descry its dim and uncertain truths, has recorded their own words with the reverence of a votary to their faiths. "The sweetness of philology allays the severity of philosophy; the main thing, in the mean time,

being the ilosophy of religion.* But, for our parts, we neither call r nology nor yet Philosophy our mistress, but serve ourselves of either as occasion requireth." Such are the words of the historian of "the Intellectual System of the Universe."

It is this mine of recondite quotations in their original languages, most accurately translated, which has imparted such an enduring value to this tr of the ancient theology, philosophy, and literature:† f wever subtle and logical was the master-mind which ca n his trains of reasoning, its abstract and abstruse nature ld not fail to prove repulsive to the superficial; for few d follow the genius who led them into "the very dark esses of antiquity," while his passionless sincerity was repugnant to the narrow creed of the orthodox. refore, could the consequence of this elaborate vo n given to the world, be, but neglect or hatred? g was "the Intellectual System" lost among a thoughtless or incurious race of readers. It appeared in 1678. It was nearly thirty years afterwards, when the neglected author was no more, in 1703, that Le Clerc, a great reader of English writers, furnished copious extracts in his "Bibliothèque Choisie," which introduced it to the knowledge of foreigners, and provoked a keen controversy with Bayle. This last great critic, who could only decide by the translated extracts, proved to be a formidable antagonist of Cudworth. At length, in 1733, more than half a century subsequent to its publication, Mosheim gave a Latin version, with learned illustrations. The translation was not made

* A remarkable expression, which we supposed was peculiar to the more enlarged views of our own age. But who can affix precise notions to general terms? Cudworth's notion of "the philosophy of religion" was probably restricted to the history of the ancient philosophies of religion.

† In the first edition, the *references* of its numerous quotations were few and imperfect: Dr. Birch, in the edition of 1743, supplied those that were wanting from Mosheim's Latin translation of the work. Warburton observed that "all the translations from the Greek are wonderfully exact."

without great difficulty; and a French one, which had been begun, was abandoned. Cudworth has invented many terms, compound or obscure; and though these may be traced to their sources, yet, when a single novel term may allude to metaphysical notions or to recondite knowledge, the learning is less to be admired than the defective perspicacity is to be regretted. It was, however, this edition of a foreigner which awakened the literary ardor of the author's countrymen towards their neglected treasure; and, in 1743, "the True Intellectual System" at length reached a second edition, republished by Birch.*

The seed of immortal thoughts are not sown to perish, even in the loose soil where they have long lain disregarded. "The Intellectual System" has furnished many writers with their secondary erudition, and possibly may have given rise to that portion of "the Divine Legation" of Warburton whose ancient learning we admire for its ingenuity, while we retreat from its paradoxes; for there is this difference between this solid and that fanciful erudition, — that Warburton has proudly made his subject full of himself, while Cudworth was earnest only to be full of his subject. The glittering edifice of Paradox was raised on movable sands; but the more awful temple has been hewn out of rocks which time can never displace. Even in our own days, Dugald Stewart has noticed that some German systems, stripped of their deep neological disguise, have borrowed from Cudworth their most valuable materials. The critical decision of Leibnitz must not, however, be rejected; for, if there is some severity in its

* It may be regretted that this valuable mass of curious erudition is not furnished with an ordinary index. A singular clew to the labyrinth the author has offered, by a running head on every single one of the thousand pages; and a minutely analytical table of the contents is appended to the mighty tome. This indeed impresses us with a full conception of the sublimity of the work itself; but our intimacy with this multitude of matters is greatly interrupted by the want of a ready reference to particulars which an ordinary index would have afforded.

truth, t e is truth in its severity. "Dans 'Le Système Intellec l' je trouve beaucoup de savoir, mais non pas assez de méditation."

Such is the great work of a great mind! We have already shown its hard fate in the neglect of the contemporaries of the author, — that thoughtless and thankless world many a great writer is doo ; and we must now touch on those human h all systems of artificial theology and s e unhappily obnoxious.

In stating the atheists at full, and oppos- ing those of th true inquirer suffered the odium of Atl s pleasant enough," says Lord Shaftesbury. Cudworth was accused of giving the up ist for having only stated their reasons and dversaries fairly together." The truth seems, that and profound author was not orthodox in his notions. xplain the difficulty of the resurrection of bodies which in death resolve themselves into their separate elements, Cudworth assumed that they would not appear in their substance as a body of flesh, but in some ethereal form. In his researches he discovered the Trinity of Plato, of Pythagoras, and of Parmenides, and that of the Persian Mithra of three Hypostases, numerically distinct, in the unity of the Godhead: this spread an alarm among his brothers the clergy, and Cudworth was perpetually referred to as an unquestionable authority by the heterodox writers on the mystery of the Christian Trinity. Even his great principle, that the Unity of the Deity was known to the polytheists, was impugned by a catholic divine as derogatory of revelation; he insisting that the Pagan divinities were only a commemoration of human beings. Yet the notion of Cudworth, so amply illustrated, was not peculiar to him; for it had already been promulgated by Lord Herbert, and by the ancients themselves.

As all such results contradicted received opinions, this

pious and learned man was condemned by some as "an Arian, a Socinian, or at best a Deist." Some praised his prudence, while others intimated his dissimulation: on several dogmas he delivers himself with great reserve, and even so ambiguously, that his own opinions are not easily ascertained, and are sometimes even contradictory. There have been more recent philosophers, who, from their prejudices, have hardly done justice to the search for truth of Cudworth: he is depreciated by Lord Bolingbroke, who, judging the philosopher by the color of his coat, has treated the divine with his keenest severity, as "one who read too much to think enough, and admired too much to think freely." Bolingbroke might envy the learning which he could not rival, and borrow from those recondite stores the knowledge which otherwise might not have reached him.

Our great author had, indeed, the heel of Achilles. Exercising the most nervous logic and the most subtle metaphysics, he was also deeply imbued with Platonic reveries. Ambitious, in his inquiries, to discuss subjects placed far beyond the reach of human faculties, he delighted, with his eager imagination, to hover about those impassable precincts which Providence and Nature have eternally closed against the human footstep. It was this disposition of his mind which gave birth to the wild hypothesis of *the plastic life of Nature*, to unfold the inscrutable operations of Providence in the changeless forms of existence. There is nothing more embarrassing to atheism, in deriving the uninterrupted phenomena of Nature from a fortuitous mechanism of inert matter, than to be compelled to ascribe the unvaried formation of animals to a cause which has no idea of what it performs, although its end denotes an intention; executing an undeviating system without any intelligence of the laws which govern it. We cannot indeed conceive every mite or gnat or fly to be the immediate handwork of the ceaseless labors of the Deity; though so perfectly artificial is even its wing or its

leg, that e Divine Artificer seems visible in the minutest production. Cudworth, to solve the enigma, fancifully concluded that the Deity had given a plastic faculty to matter, —"a vital and spiritual, but unintelligent and necessary, agent to execute its purposes." He raised up a sort of middle substance between matter and spirit,—it seemed both or neither: and our philosopher, roving through the whole creation, sometimes desc inferior subordinate agent of the Deity, doing u y, without consciousness; lower than animal life; drowsy unawakened mind, not knowing, but only d ing to commands and laws impressed upon it.

The consequence dedu e subtle Bayle from this fanciful system was, that, Deity ever given such a plastic faculty, it was a hat it is not repugnant to the nature of things, th gent and necessary agents should operate, and therefore a ive power might be essential to matter, and things thus might exist of themselves.* It weakened the great objection against atheism. Philosophers, to extricate themselves from occult phenomena, have too often flung over the gaping chasms which they cannot fill up, the slight plank of a vague conjecture, or have constructed the temporary bridge of an artificial hypothesis; and thus they have hazarded what yields no sure footing. Of this "folly of the wise," the inexplicable ether of Newton, the whirling worlds or vortices of Descartes, and the vibrations and the vibratiuncles of Hartley, among so many similar fancies of other philosophers, furnish a memorable evidence. The *plastic life of Nature*, as explained by Cudworth, only substituted a novel term for a blind, unintelligent agent, and could neither endure the ridicule of Bolingbroke nor the logic of Bayle, and is thrown aside among the deceitful fancies of scholastic dreamers.

* Continuation des Pensées Diverses, iii. 90.

There was indeed, from his earliest days, a tinge of Platonic refinement in the capacious understanding of this great metaphysician. The theses he maintained at college were the dawn of the genius of his future works. One was on "the Eternal Differences between Good and Evil," which probably led long after to his treatise on "Eternal and Immutable Morality," — an exposition of the dangerous doctrines of Hobbes and the Antinomians.* The other question he disputed was, that "there are incorporeal substances immortal in their own nature," — a topic he afterwards investigated in "the True Intellectual System of the Universe," against the principles of the Epicurean philosophy. These scholastic exercises are an evidence that the youthful student was already shaping in his mind the matters and the subjects of his future great work. Beautiful is this unity of mind which we discover in every master-genius! Even into his divinity he seems to have carried the same fanciful refinement: he maintained that "the Lord's Supper was a feast upon a sacrifice;" and such was the charm of this mysterious doctrine, that it was adopted by some of the greatest divines and scholars. It is not therefore surprising that Cudworth was held in the highest estimation by the Platonic Dr. More, of which I give a remarkable instance. Cudworth, as other divines, wrote on Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, which, he says in a letter, is "a Defence of Christianity against Judaism; the seventy weeks never having yet been sufficiently cleared and improved." Since the days of Cudworth, others have "cleared and improved," and his "demonstration" is not even noticed among subsequent "demonstrations;" but Judaism still remains. Yet, on this theological revery, Dr. More has used this forcible language: "Mr. Cudworth has demonstrated the manifestation of the

* This volume, still read and valued, was fortunately saved amidst the wreck of the author's manuscripts, and was published, from his own autograph copy which he had prepared for the press, so late as 1781, 8vo.

Messiah have fallen out at the end of the sixty-ninth week, and his passion in the midst of the seventieth. This demonstration is of as much price and worth in theology as either the circulation of the blood in physic, or the motion of the earth in natural philosophy." This is not only a curious instance of the argumentative theology of that period, but of the fascination of a most refining genius influencing kindred imaginations.

We now come to record ...ncholy fate of this great work in connection with its ...thor. He had arranged it into three elaborate vo... we possess only the first, — the refutation of atheism ...bject, however, is of itself complete. Although I kno... ...y private correspondence of Cudworth, after the ... ...on of "the Intellectual System," which might mor... ...ly reveal the state of his feelings, and the cause of ... ...pression of his work, in which he had made cons... ...progress, yet we are acquainted with circumstances which too clearly describe its unhappy fate. We learn from Warburton, that this pious and learned scholar was the victim of calumny; and that, too sensitive to his injuries, he grew disgusted with his work: his ardor slackened, and the mass of his papers lay in cold neglect. The philosophical divine participated in the fate of the few, who, like him, searched for truth freed from the manacles of received opinions.

Cudworth left his manuscripts to the care of his daughter, Lady Masham, the friend of Locke, who passed his latter days in her house at Oates. Her ladyship was literary, but the reverse of a Platonical genius: she wrote against the Platonic Norris's "Love of God," and admitted in her religion no principles which were not practicable in morals; and seems to have been rather the disciple of the author of "the Human Understanding" than the daughter of the author of "the Intellectual System." For the good sense of Lady Masham, erudition lost its curiosity, and imagination its charm;

and she probably with some had certain misgivings of the tendency of her father's writings! He had himself been careless of them; for we know of no testamentary direction for their preservation. By her these unvalued manuscripts were not placed in a cabinet, but thrown in a heap into the dark corner of some neglected shelf in the library at Oates; and from thence, after the lapse of half a century, they were turned out, with some old books, by the last Lord Masham, to make room for a fashionable library for his second lady. A bookseller purchased them, with a notion that this waste paper contained the writings of Locke; and, printing a Bible under the editorship of the famous Dr. Dodd, introduced the Scripture notes, found among the heap, in the commentary, under the name of Locke. The papers were accidentally discovered to be parts of "the Intellectual System;" and, after having suffered mutilation and much confusion in the various mischances which they passed through, they finally repose among our national collections, — fragments on fragments which may yet be inspected by those whose intrepidity would patiently venture on the discoveries which lie amid this mass of theological metaphysics. They are thus described in Ayscough's "Catalogue," 4983: — "Collection of Confused Thoughts, Memorandums, &c., relating to the Eternity of Torments, — Thoughts on Pleasure, — Commonplace Book of Motives to Moral Duties, two volumes; and five volumes on Free-will." This description is imperfect; and many other subjects, the groundwork of his future inquiries, will be found in these voluminous manuscripts. One volume, still highly valued, was snatched from the wreck, — Cudworth's "Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality," which was edited by Dr. Chandler many years after the death of the author.

After all, we possess a mighty volume, subject no longer to neglect nor to mischance. "The True Intellectual System of the Universe" exists without a parallel for its matter, its

subject, a d its manner. Its matter furnishes the unsunned treasures of ancient knowledge, the history of the thoughts, the imaginations, and the creeds, of the profoundest intellects of mankind on the Deity. Its subject, though veiled in metaphysics more sublime than human reasoning can pierce, yet shows enough for us to adore; and its manner, brightened by a subdued Platonism, inculcates the immutability of moral distinctions, and vindicates r· agency of the human being against the impious tenets eliver him over a blind captive to an inexorable "neces

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PUBLISHERS OF CONTEMPORARY MEMOIRS.

THE editors of contemporary memoirs have often suffered an impenetrable mystery to hang over their publications by an apparent suppression of the original. By this studious evasion of submitting the manuscript to public inspection, they long diminished the credit of the printed volumes. Enemies whose hostility the memorialists had raised up, in the mean while practised every artifice of detraction, racking their invention to persuade the world that but little faith was due to these pretended revelations; while the editors, mute and timorous, from private motives which they wished to conceal, dared not explain, in their lifetime, the part which they had really taken in editing these works. In the course of years, circumstances often became too complicated to be disentangled, or were of too delicate a nature to be nakedly exposed to the public scrutiny; the accusations grew more confident, the defence more vague, the suspicions more probable, the rumors and the hearsays more prevalent: the public confidence in the authenticity of these contemporary memoirs was thus continually shaken.

Such has been the fate of the "History" of the Earl of Clarendon, which, during a long interval of time, had to contend with prudential editors and its perfidious opponents; and it is only at this late day that we are enabled to draw the veil from the mystery of its publication, and to reconcile the contradictory statements so positively alleged by the assertors

of the i ity of the text and the impugners of its genuine-
ness. now can adjust with certainty so many vague
protestations of its authenticity, by those who could not them-
selves have known it, with the sceptical cavils which at times
seemed not always doubtful, and with one infamous charge
which was not less positive than it proved to be utterly ficti-
tious. The fate and character of this great historical work
was long involved in t ricate and obscure inci-
dents; and this bibliogra ffers a striking illustration
of the disingenuity alike ants and the defenders.

The "History" c ON was composed by the
express desire of t. This prince, in the
midst of his fugitive and ife, seemed still regardful
of posterity; a re it not too flattering to
his judgment, tha f this historian, he antici-
pated the gen n iter. We know the king
carefully conveyed to the hor many historical docu-
ments, to furnish this vindication, or apology, of the calamitous measures to which that fated sovereign was driven. The earnest performance of this design, fervid with the eloquence of the writer, proceeding on such opposite principles to those of the advocates of popular freedom, and bearing on its awful front the condemnatory title of "the Rebellion," provoked their indignant feelings; and, from its first appearance, they attempted to blast its credit by sinking it into a mere party production. But the elevated character of "the Chancellor of Human Nature," as Warburton emphatically described him, stood almost beyond the reach of his assailants: it was by a circuitous attack that they contrived to depreciate the work by pointing their assault on the presumed editors of the posthumous "History." And though the genius of the historian, and the peculiarity of his style, could not but be apparent through the whole of this elaborate work, yet rumors soon gathered from various quarters, that the text had been tampered with by "the Oxford editors;" and some, judging by

the preface, and the heated and party dedication to the queen, which, it has been asserted, afterwards induced the Tory frenzy of Sacheverell, imagined that the editors had converted the "History" into a vehicle of their own passions. The "History" of Clarendon was declared to be mutilated, interpolated, and, at length, even forged: the taint of suspicion long weakened the confidence of general readers. Even Warburton suspected that the editors had taken the liberty of omitting passages; but, with a reliance on their honor, he believed they had never dared to incorporate any additions of their own.

The "History" of Lord CLARENDON thus, from its first appearance, was attended by the concomitant difficulties of contemporary history, as we shall find the editors soon discovered when they sat down to their task; difficulties which occasioned their peculiar embarrassments. Even the noble author himself had considered that "a piece of this nature, wherein the infirmities of some, and the malice of others, both things and persons, must be boldly looked upon and mentioned, is not likely to appear in the age in which it was written." Lord Clarendon seems to have been fully aware, that the freedom of the historical pen is equally displeasing to all parties. A contemporary historian is doomed to the peculiar unhappiness of encountering living witnesses; prompt to challenge the correctness of his details, and the fairness of his views: for him the complaints of friends will not be less unreasonable than the clamors of foes. And this happened to the present work. The "History" was not only assailed by men of a party, but by men of a family. They whose relatives had immolated their persons, and wrecked their fortunes, by their allegiance to the royal cause, were mortified by the silence of the historian: the writer was censured for omissions which had never entered into his design; for he was writing less a general history of the civil war, than a particular one of "the Rebellion," as he deemed it. Others eagerly protested against the misrepresentation of the characters of their ancestors; but, as all family

feelings a e in reality personal ones, such interested accusers may not be less partial and prejudiced than the contemporary historian himself. He, at least, should be allowed to possess the advantage of a more immediate knowledge of what he narrates, and the right of that free opinion, which deprived of, he would cease to be "the servant of posterity." Lord Lansdowne was indignant at [illegible]ity of the military portrait of his ancestor, Sir [illegible]nvill, and has left a warm apology to palliate a [illegible]h Clarendon had honestly condemned; and rece[illegible] Earl of Ashburnham wrote two agreeable volum[illegible]hat Clarendon was jealous of the royal favor which [illegible] Ashburnham enjoyed, and to which the descendant [illegible] the depreciation of that favorite's character.

The authenticity of the "[illegible]" soon became a subject of national attention. The p[illegible] of the two great factions which ruled our political circ[illegible]d broken forth from these kindling pages of the recent history of their own day. They were treading on ashes which covered latent fires. Whenever a particular sentence raised the anger of some, or a provoking epithet for ever stuck to a favorite personage, the offended parties were willing to believe that these might be interpolations; for it was positively affirmed that such there were. Twenty years after its first publication, we find Sir Joseph Jekyl, in the House of Commons, solemnly declaring that he had reason to believe that the "History of the Rebellion" had not been printed faithfully.

An incident of a very singular nature had occurred, even before the publication of the "History," which assuredly was unknown to the editors. Dr. Calamy, the historian of the nonconformists, at the time that Lord Clarendon's "History" was printing at Oxford, was himself on the point of publishing his "Narrative" of Baxter, and was anxious to ascertain the statements of his lordship on certain matters which entered into his own "History." This astute divine, with something

of the cunning of the serpent, whatever might be his dovelike innocence, hit upon an extraordinary expedient, by submitting the dignity of his order to pass through a most humiliating process. The crafty doctor posted to Oxford; and there, cautiously preserving the incognito, after ingratiating himself into the familiarity of the waiter, and then of the perruquier, he succeeded in procuring a secret communication with one of the printers. The good man exults in the wonders which sometimes may be opened to us by what he terms "a silver key rightly applied." The doctor had invented the treason, and now had only to seek for the traitor. A faithless workman supplied him with a sight of all the sheets printed; and, with a still grosser violation of the honor of the craft, exposed the naked manuscript itself to the prying eyes of the critical dissenter. To the honor of Clarendon, as far as concerned Calamy's narrative, there was no disagreement; but the aspect of the manuscript puzzled the learned doctor. It appeared not to be the original, but a transcript, wherein he observed "alterations and interlineations:" paragraphs were struck out, and insertions added. Here seemed an important discovery, not likely to remain buried in the breast of the historian of the nonconformists; and he gradually let it out among his literary circle. The appearance of the manuscript fully warranted the conviction, of him who was not unwilling to believe, that the "History" of Clarendon had been moulded by the hands of those dignitaries of Oxford who were supposed to be the real editors. The "History" was soon called, in contempt, "the Oxford History." The earliest rumors of a corrupt text probably originated in this quarter; as it is now certain, since the confession of Dr. Calamy appears in his diary, that he was the first who had discovered the extraordinary state of the manuscript.

Some inaccuracies, great negligence of dates, certain apparent contradictions, and some imperfect details, — often occasioned by the noble emigrant's distant retirements, deprived,

as we now w, of his historical collections, — did not tend to dissipate the prevalent suspicions. The manuscript was frequently called for; but, on inquiry, it was not found in the Bodleian Library: it was said to be locked up in a box deposited in the library of the Earl of Rochester, who had died since the publication. Sometimes they heard of a transcript, and sometimes of an original: it was reported that the autograph work by Lord among other valuables, had been destroyed in the the Earl of Rochester's house at New Park. Tl became more importunate in their demands, and i norous in their expostulations.

About this period, Oldmi of the renowned of the "Dunciad," stepped forth as l adventurer in history. He enlisted on the popular e claimed the honors of the most devoted patriotism: what degree he may have merited these will best appea we shall more intimately discover the man himself. Oldmixon had wholly engaged with a party; and, being an industrious hand, had assigned to himself a good deal of work. Preparatory to his copious "History" of the Stuarts, he had preluded by two smaller works his "Critical History of England," and his "Clarendon and Whitelocke Compared." He had repeatedly insinuated his suspicions, that the "History of the Rebellion" was not the entire work of Clarendon; but the more formal attack, by specifying the falsified passages, at length appeared in the preface to his "History" of the Stuarts. The subject of the genuineness of Clarendon's text had so long engaged public discussion, that it evidently induced this writer to particularize it, among other professed discoveries, on his extensive title-page, as one not the least likely to invite the eager curiosity of his readers. The heavy charge was here announced to be at length brought to a positive demonstration. We perceive the writer's complacency, when with an air of triumph he declared, "To all which is prefixed some account of the

liberties taken with Clarendon's History *before it came to the press*, — such liberties as make it doubtful what part of it is Clarendon's, and what not."

It is here we find the anonymous communication of "a gentleman of distinction;" who was soon known to be Col. Ducket, an M.P., and a Commissioner of the Excise. The colonel details a conversation with Edmund Smith, the poet, who died at his seat, that "there had been a fine 'History' written by Lord Clarendon: but what was published under his name was patchwork, and might as properly be called the 'History' of the deans Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; for to his knowledge it was altered, and he himself was employed to interpolate the original." In a copy of the "History," Smith had scored numerous passages of this sort, and particularly the famous one of Cinna, which had been applied to the character of Hampden.

We may conceive the sensation produced by this apparently authenticated tale. Oldmixon in triumph confirms it, too, from another quarter; for he appeals to "a reverend divine now living, who saw the Oxford copy by which the book was printed, altered, and interpolated." This divine was our Dr. Calamy, who could not deny what he had truly affirmed.

The anonymous voucher for this extraordinary charge which appears in the preface was an after-thought of our historical scribe at the late hour of publication, when it must have occurred to him that the world would require the most positive testimony of such a foul forgery. It is remarkable that Oldmixon had already, in the body of his work, broadly embroidered the narrative. We may form some notion of the mode in which this impetuous writer composed history, blending his passions with his facts, by observing what he did in the present matter. In the text of his history, we discover the tale solemnly worked up into a tragic scene of penitential remorse on a death-bed; and, still farther to

appropr and confirm the exciting narrative of this forgery, he had ully bolstered it up by an accompanying anecdote. When Smi h the poet had foisted in the description of Cataline (or Ci na, as it is erroneously written in Clarendon), one of the doctors slapped him on the back, exclaiming with an asseveration, "*It will do!*" And our historian proceeds: "The remorse he expressed for being concerned in this imposture were his last wor then declares, that, in the highly finished portraits o n, "all likeness is lost in a barren superfluity of v workings of a prejudiced imagination, where one may the drawing was his own. But that there has been bing in some places, and more dirt in others, put in itors, is now incontestable. In those clumsy painters i hands his work fell, there is something so very that such coin could only come from a college and inconsiderately, but not the less maliciously, Oldm led his rapid page, and betrays his eagerness to snatch at any floating rumor or loose conversation, which he gives the world with the confidence, though he could not with the dignity, of historical truth. And it is this reckless abandonment of his pen in his post-haste and partial works of history which must ever weaken our trust in those more interesting portions for whose authority he refers to unknown manuscripts; and the more so, when we often detect his maimed and warped, and even interpolated, quotations; and, farther, recollect that Oldmixon stands himself a convicted criminal at the bar of history, having been detected in interpolating the historian Daniel when employed as editor by Kennet, which sunk the value of the first edition of that historical collection.

How was this positive and particularizing charge to be refuted? Years had elapsed, and Smith had never whispered such an important secret to any friend. The original manuscript had not yet appeared to confront the detractor, and to prove the fidelity of the editors. There are difficulties which

truth cannot always surmount. It is not only easier to raise a falsehood than to prove a truth, but it is possible that there may be accidents which may wholly prevent the discovery of truth. Of an accusation made years after the event, and the persons no longer in existence, we may never be enabled to remove the objections which it has succeeded in raising.

From this calamity the "History" of Clarendon had a narrow escape. All the parties concerned were no longer in life, save one, who seemed as much lost to the world, — Atterbury, forgotten in exile. The authenticity of the "History" of Clarendon was, however, the concern of literary Europe. Foreign journalists conveyed the astounding tale, assuring the literary exile, that, if he remained silent, the accusation must be considered as proved. The reply did not linger; for a simple fact demolished this inartificial fabric. Atterbury solemnly declared that he had never seen any manuscript of Lord Clarendon's "History;" that he believed he had never exchanged a word in his life with Smith, whose habitual conduct was too loose to tolerate; and, if that were true which Ducket had affirmed, that "Smith had died with a lie in his mouth." Atterbury added some new information respecting the real editors, who were Dean Aldrich and Bishop Sprat, and the late Earl of Rochester, the son of Lord Clarendon.

This unexpected confutation from the sole survivor of the accused parties revived the dismayed Clarendonians. The cards had changed; and these in their turn called for a sight of that copy of Clarendon said to have been scored by Smith. Oldmixon, baffled and mortified, appealed to his communicator; the most idle prevarications were alleged; and Col. Ducket even cavilled at the wording of the letter which Oldmixon had published. Both parties were anxious to fling the odium on the other; but neither had the honesty to retract the slander. We may believe that they were both convinced that the manuscript of Clarendon had been tampered with, but that neither could ascertain either the matter

or the mer. Ducket died during their embarrassment, and to his last day persisted in confirming his account, and even furnis ing fresh particulars, as Oldmixon assures us.

In this extraordinary history of the fate of a disputed manuscript, which all had inquired after, and none had found, an incident occurred which put to rout Oldmixon and the numerous objectors to its ity. Seven books of the Clarendon manuscripts were discovered lodged in the custody of a lawyer lett's Buildings, Holborn, who was one of the execut ie second Earl of Clarendon; and, to the utter di Oldmixon, the often-controverted passage of Hamp to be seen in the original writing of the noble auth eral distinguished personages were admitted to cons utograph: but when others applied, who came formally with an autograph letter of Lord Clarendon, to com e writing with the manuscript, the lawyer was alarmed ie hostile investigation, and cautiously evaded an inspection by these eager inquirers; perhaps judging, that, whatever might be the consequence, the trouble was certain.

Oldmixon, in his last distress, persisted in declaring that he was not bound to trust in the genuineness of a manuscript of which he was refused the examination. It must be acknowledged, that any partial view of the Clarendon manuscript, seen by a few, was not sufficient to establish its authority with the public; and certainly till the recent edition by Dr. Bandinel appeared, admirably collated, the aspersions and surmises of the objectors to its genuineness had by no means been removed, and, we may add, were not wholly unfounded.

This history of the great work of Lord Clarendon would be imperfect, did we not develop the real causes which so long continued to obscure the inquiry, and involve its mysterious publication in the most perplexing intricacy.

Lord Clarendon himself not only doubted the propriety of

the publication, but had even consented to its suppression till a "fit season, which was not likely to be in the present age." His elevated genius looked far onward to posterity. In his remarkable will, he recommended his sons to consult Archbishop Sancroft and Bishop Morley; and it was only his second son, the Earl of Rochester, who took an active part. The position of editors was as delicate as it was perilous; and it has been aptly described by the last editor, who at length has furnished us with a complete Clarendon: "The immediate descendants of the principal actors were alive; many were high in favor; others were connected by the closer links of friendship or alliance." The change of a virulent epithet might be charitable, and spare the ulcerated memories of a family; and time, which blunts the keen edge of political animosities, might plead for the omission of "the unfavorable part of a character," which happened to be rather of a domestic than of a public nature.

All these were important causes which perplexed the editorship of the "History" of Lord Clarendon; and there were also minor ones which operated on the publication. Difficulties occurred in the arrangement of the parts. The earl hardly lived to revise his work: portions of the "Life" had been marked by him to be transferred to the "History." The first transcript by Shaw, the secretary of the author, was discovered to be very incorrect. It was necessary that a fairer copy should repair the negligence of the secretary's. Dean Aldrich read the proofs, and transmitted them to the Earl of Rochester, accompanied by the manuscript copy which the earl preserved. The corrections on the proofs were by his hand. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, who then had the reputation of being the most skilful critic in our vernacular idiom, it appears, suggested some verbal alterations. But it was affirmed, that the Earl of Rochester had been so scrupulous in altering the style of his father, and so cautious not to allow of any variations from the original, that the strictures

of Spr[illegible]l not been complied with; which, however, was not true: [illegible]r, though the Earl of Rochester would allow no hand but [illegible] own to correct the proofs, there were omissions and verba[illegible] alterations, and occasionally may be found what went far beyond the mere change of words or phrases.

The manuscript which Calamy saw at the press shows that the transcript, howeve[illegible]required corrections; and probably some confusion [illegible]mes occurred in transferring passages from the [illegible]to the "History." This only can account for the re[illegible]suspicions of "the Curious Impertinent," which part l[illegible] so gratuitously acted by the learned doctor on this [illegible], and evidently spread the first rumors of a corrupted [illegible]tered text.

The pretended forgery [illegible]ndon was nothing but a gross imposture. Who [illegible] deeply concerned in the fabricated lie, we cannot [illegible]rtain. Of the poet, however, we know, that, after re[illegible] admonitions, he had been expelled his college for habitual irregularities; and, having lost his election of the censorship of the college, indulged vindictive feelings towards Dean Aldrich. It was his delight to ridicule and vituperate the Christ-Church deans; and he might have called the "History" of Clarendon, "patch-work," from some imperfect knowledge picked up at the Oxford press. The poet, whose conversation flowed with his wine, on a visit at the seat of Col. Ducket, indulging to excess his Epicurean tastes, there died suddenly of repletion, by prescribing for himself so potent a dose, that the apothecary warned him of "the perilous stuff;" which advice was received with contempt. As the scored Clarendon by Smith was never brought forth, it probably never existed to the extent described; and, as Smith died unexpectedly, there could have been no scene of a death-bed repentance about a forgery which had never been committed. The party-lie caught up in conversation was too suitable to the purposes of Oldmixon's "History" not to be preserved, and even exaggerated: Ducket found a ready

tool in a popular historian, who was not too critical in his researches, whenever they answered his end.

But Truth is the daughter of Time: all the Clarendon manuscripts at length were collected together, and now securely repose in the Bodleian Library, where, had they been deposited at first, the anxiety and contention which for half a century disturbed the peace of honest inquirers had been spared. Why they were not there placed, open to public inspection, is no longer difficult to conjecture. Although no historical fact in the main had been altered, yet omissions and variations, and some of a delicate nature, there were, sufficient to awaken the keen glance of a malicious or an offended observer. The anxious solicitude to withdraw the manuscripts till they might more safely be examined, at a remote period, was the real and the sole cause of their mysterious concealment, and led many from party-motives to question the authenticity, and others to defend the genuineness, of which they were so many years without any evidence.

This bibliographical tale affords a striking illustration of the nature of hearsays, surmises, and cavils; of confident accusations, but ill parried by vague defences; of the infamous fictions to which party-men can be driven; all which were the consequences of that apparent suppression of the original work, which had occurred from the critical difficulties which await the editors of contemporary memoirs. The disingenuity of both parties, however, is not less observable; for while the Clarendonians maintained that the editors, as these had protested, scrupulously followed the manuscript, they themselves had never seen the original; and the Oldmixons as audaciously assumed that it was interpolated and mutilated, without, however, producing any other evidence than their own surmises, or gross fictions of popular rumors.

With the fate of Clarendon before his eyes, a witness of the injury which this mysterious mode of publishing the "History" of Lord Clarendon had occasioned, the son of Bishop Burnet

suffere[illegible]t congenial work, the "History of his own Times," to partu[illegible]te in the same ill-fortune. On the publication of the firs[illegible]olume, this editor promised that the autograph "should be deposited in the Cottonian Library, for the satisfaction of the public, as soon as the second volume should be printed." This was not done: the editor was repeatedly called on to perform that solemn contract in which he had engaged with the public. A recei[illegible]ad damaged many of the Cottonian Manuscripts[illegible]s now pleaded as an excuse for not trusting the [illegible]uscript to the chance of destruction. Exposti[illegible]tion [illegible]et with evasion. We are not now ignorant of the rea[illegible] of this breach of a solemn duty. The bishop in his w[illegible]xpressly enjoined that his 'History" should be given [illegible]te in which he had himself left it. But the freedom [illegible]ernal pen had alarmed the filial editor. He found n[illegible] the exact position which the son of Lord Clarendon [illegible]eady pre-occupied. Omissions were made to abate the displeasure of those who would have writhed under the severity of the historian's censure; characters were but partially delineated, and the tale sometimes was left half told. It happened that the bishop had often submitted his manuscript to the eyes of many during his lifetime. Curious researchers into facts, and profound observers of opinions, had become diligent extractors, more particularly the supervisor of the printed proofs; and, when the printed volumes appeared, most of these omissions stood as living testimonials to the faithlessness of the prudential editor. The margins of various copies, among the curious in literature, overflowed with the castrations: the forbidden fruit was plucked. We now have the "History" of Burnet, not entirely according to "the will" of the fervid chronicler, but as far as its restored passages could be obtained; for some, it is evident, have never been recovered.* Thus it happened that

* Burnet's "History," iv. 552, edition 1823.

the editors of Clarendon and Burnet form a parallel case, suffering under the inconveniences of editors of contemporary memoirs.

The perplexed feeling of the times in regard to both these "Histories" we may catch from a manuscript letter of the great collector, Dr. Rawlinson: "Among Bishop Turner's* manuscripts," Rawlinson writes, "are observations on Lord Clarendon's 'History,' when sent him by old Edward's son, the nonjuror, who gave it to Alma Mater: *if alterations were made*, this may be a means of discovering. I have often wondered why *the original manuscript* of that 'History' is not put into some public place to answer all objections; but, when I consider *a whimsical family*, my surprise is the less. Judge BURNET has promised, under his hand, on the backside of every title of the second volume of his father's 'History of his Life and Times,' to put in the originals into some public library; but *quando* is the case. I purchased the manuscript of a gentleman who corrected the press, when that book was printed; and amongst his papers I have *all the castrations*, many of which, I believe, he communicated to Dr. Beach's sons, whom T. Burnet had abused in a Life of his father, at the end of the second volume."† Here, then, the world possessed sufficient evidence, at the time of their early appearance, that these "Histories" had suffered variations and omissions by the heirs of their authors, and the imperfect executors of their solemn and testamentary will.

I cannot quit the present subject without a remark on these great party "Histories" of Clarendon and Burnet. Both have passed through the fiery ordeal of national opinion; and both, with some of their pages singed, remain unconsumed: the one criticised for its solemn eloquence, the other ridiculed for its homely simplicity; the one depreciated for its partiality, the other for its inaccuracy; both alike, as we

* *Sic* in original, but probably Tanner.

† Rawlinson's Bodleian Manuscripts, vol. ii. lett. 38.

have seen, by their opposite parties, once considered as works utterly rejected from the historical shelf.

But Posterity reverences Genius; for Posterity only can decide on its true worth. Time, potent over criticism, has avenged our two great writers of the history of their own days. The awful genius of CLARENDON is still paramount, and the vehement spirit of BURNET has often its secret revelations confirmed. Such shall ever be the fate of those precious writings, which, though they have to contend with the passions of their own age, yet, originating in the personal intercourse of the writers with the subject of their narratives, possess an endearing charm which no criticism can dissolve, a reality which outlasts fiction, and a truth which diffuses its vitality over pages which cannot die.*

* I refer the reader to "Curiosities of Literature," vol. iii., art. "Of Suppressors and Dilapidators of Manuscripts:" he will there find, that in the case of the Marquis of Halifax's Diary, of which to secure its preservation the writer had left two copies, both were silently destroyed by two opposite partisans; the one startled at some mean deceptions of the revolutionists of 1688, and the other at the Catholic intrigues of the court.

THE WAR AGAINST BOOKS.

THE history of our literature, at the early era of printing, till the first indications appear of what is termed "copyright," forms a chapter in the history of our civilization which has not been opened to us.

This history includes two important incidents in our literary annals: the one, an exposition of the complicate arts practised by an alarmed government to possess an absolute control over the printers, which annihilated the freedom of the press; and the other, the contests of those printers and booksellers who had grants and licenses, and other privileges of a monopoly, with the rest of the brotherhood, who maintained an equal right of publication, and contended for the freedom of the trade.

Although Caxton, our first printer, bore the title of *Regius Impressor*, printed books were still so rare in this country under Richard the Third, that an act of parliament in 1483 contains a proviso in favor of aliens to encourage the importation of books. During a period of forty years, books were supplied by foreign printers, some of whom appear to have accompanied their merchandise, and to have settled themselves here. It became necessary to repeal this privilege conceded to foreign presses, when, under Henry the Eighth, the art of printing was skilfully exercised by the king's natural subjects; and to protect the English printers, lest their art should decline from a failure of encouragement.

Our earliest printers were the vendors and the binders of their own books, and their domicile on their titlepages

directed curious to their abodes. Few in number, their limited [illegible]us, it is conjectured, did not exceed from two to four hundred copies. The first printers were generally men of competent wealth, and every book was the sole property of its single proprietor. The separate departments of author, bookseller, and bookbinder, were not yet required; for as yet there was no "reading public." Some of our ancient printers combined all these characters in themselves. The commerce of literature had not yet opened [illegible] speculative vendors of books, and that race of writers [illegible]ave been designated in the modern phrase as "author-[illegible] profession." The very nature of literary property could [illegible]ly originate in a more advanced and intellectual state [illegible] society, when unsettled opinions and contending principles [illegible]would create a growing demand for books which [illegible]et contemplated, and a property, of a novel and peculiar [illegible]ure, in the very thoughts and words of a writer.

The art of printing, confined within a few hands, was usually practised under the patronage of the king, or the archbishop, or some nobleman. There existed not the remotest suspicion that the simple machinery of the printer's press could ever be converted into an engine of torture to try the strength or the truth of the church and the state. Sedition, or any allusion to public affairs, never entered the brains of the ingenious mechanics, solely occupied in lowering the prices of the text-writers in the manuscript market by their own novel and wondrous transcript. Their first wares had consisted of romances, which were consulted as authentic histories; "dictes, or sayings," of ancient sages which no one cared to contradict; and homilies and allegories whose voluminousness had no tediousness. Neither did the higher powers ever imagine that any control seemed needful over the printer's press. They only lent the sanction of their names, or the shelter of their abode, at the Abbey of Westminster or the Monastery of St. Alban's, to encourage the manufacture

of a novel curiosity, for its beautiful toy, a printed book; and the press at first was at once free and innocent.

But the day of portents was not slow in its approach: a stirring age pressed on, — an age for books. Under Henry the Eighth, books became the organs of the passions of mankind, and were not only printed, but spread about; for, if the presses of England dared not disclose the hazardous secrets of the writers, the people were surreptitiously furnished with English books from foreign presses. It was then that the jealousy of the state opened its hundred eyes on the awful track of the strange omnipotence of the press. Then first began that WAR AGAINST BOOKS, which has not ceased in our time.

Perhaps he who first, with a statesman's prescient view, had contemplated on this novel and unknown power, and, as we shall see, had detected its insidious steps stealing into the cabinet of the sovereign, was the great minister of this great monarch. It has been surmised that the cardinal aimed to crush the head of the serpent by stopping the printing-press in the Monastery at St. Alban's, of which he was the abbot; for that press remained silent for half a century. In a convocation, the cardinal expressed his hostility against printing; assuring the simple clergy, that, if they did not in time suppress printing, printing would suppress them.* This great statesman, at this early period, had taken into view its remote consequences. Lord Herbert has curiously assigned to the cardinal his ideas as addressed to the pope: "This new invention of printing has produced various effects of which your holiness cannot be ignorant. If it has restored books and learning, it has also been the occasion of those sects and schisms which daily appear. Men begin to call in question the present faith and tenets of the church; and the laity read the Scriptures, and pray in their vulgar tongue. Were this

* See a curious note of Hearne's, in his Glossary to "Peter Langtoft's Chronicle," p. 685; also Herbert's "Typog. Antiq.," p. 1435.

suffered, the common people might come to believe that there was not so much use of the clergy. If men were persuaded that they could make their own way to God, and in their ordinary language as well as Latin, the authority of the mass would fall, which would be very prejudicious to our ecclesiastical orders. The mysteries of religion must be kept in the hands of priests, — the secret and arcanum of church government. Nothing remains more to be done than to prevent further apostasy. For this purpose, since printing could not be put down, it were best to set up learning against learning; and, by introducing able persons to dispute, to suspend the laity between fears and controversies. Since printing cannot be put down, it may still be made useful." Thus the statesman, who could not by a single blow annihilate this monster of all schism, would have wrestled with it with a statesman's policy.

The cardinal at length was shaken by terrors he had never before felt from the hated press. This minister had writhed under the printed personalities of the rabid SKELTON and the merciless ROY; but a pamphlet in the form of "the Supplication of Beggars" is a famed invective, which served as a prelude to the fall of the minister. The author, SIMON FISH, had been a student of Gray's Inn, where, in an Aristophanic interlude, he had enacted his grace the cardinal to the life, and deemed himself fortunate to escape from his native shores to elude the gripe of Wolsey. In this pamphlet, all the poverty of the nation, — for our national poverty at all times is the cry of "the beggars," — the taxation and the grievances, are all laid to the oppression of the whole motley prelacy. These were the thieves and the freebooters, the cormorants and the wolves, of the state; and the king had nothing more to do than to put them to the cart's tail, and end all the beggary of England by appropriating the monastic lands.

On a day of a procession at Westminster, this seditious

tract, aiming at the annihilation of the whole revenues of churchmen, was found scattered in the streets. Wolsey had the copies carefully gathered and delivered to him, to prevent any from reaching the king's eyes. Merchants, at that day, were often itinerants in their way of trade with their foreign correspondents, and frequently conveyed to England these writings of our fugitive reformers. Two of these merchants, by the favor of Anne Bullen, had a secret interview with the king. They offered to recite to the royal ear the substance of the suppressed libel. "I dare say you have it all by heart," the king shrewdly observed, and listened. After a pause, Henry let fall this remarkable observation: "If a man should pull down an old stone wall, and begin at the lower part, the upper might chance to fall on his head." What at that moment was passing in the sagacious mind of the future regal reformer, is now more evident than probably it was to its first hearers. Wolsey, suspicious and troubled, came to warn the king of "a pestilent heretical libel being abroad." Henry, suddenly drawing the very libel out of his bosom, presented a portentous copy to the startled and falling minister. The book became a court-book; and "the witty atheistical author," as the Roman-Catholic historian designated him, was invited back to England under the safeguard of the royal protection.

But the secret and perhaps the yet obscure influence of the press must often have been apparent to Henry the Eighth, when the king sat in council. There he marked the alarms of Wolsey, and the terrified remonstrances of the entire body of "the Papelins;" and, when the day came that their ejectors filled their seats, the king discovered, that, though the objects were changed, the same dread of the press continued. The war against books commenced: an expurgatory index, or a catalogue of prohibited books, chiefly English, was sent forth before Henry had broken with the papal power; subsequently, the fresher proclamation declared the books of

the Papel s to be "seditious," as the use of "the new learning" had en anathematized as "heretical."

In these rapid events, dates become as essential as arguments. 1526, anti-popery books, with their dispersers, were con mned as heretical. In 1535, all books favoring popery were decreed to be "seditious books." There were books on the king's suprem for or against, which cost some of their writers their h and there were "injunctions against English quently renewed as "pestilent and infectious learni All these show that now the press had obtained ac id betray the uneasy condition of the ruling powe were startled by a supernatural voice which they l er before heard.

When the first persecution he new religion" occurred, it did not abate the secret ions of Lutheran books.† These with the merchant h ie an article of commerce; and with the zealous dispenser, an article of faith: both alike ventured their lives in conveying them to London and other places, and even smuggled them into the universities. They landed their prohibited goods in the most distant places, at Colchester or in Norfolk. One of these chapmen in this hazardous commodity of free-thinking was at last caught at his bookbinder's. He suffered at the flaming stake, and others met his fate.

It was now apparent that the secrecy and velocity of conveying the novel projects of reform, which could not otherwise have been communicated to the great body of the people till this awful instrument had been set to work; the unity of opinion which it might create among the confused multitude; and the passions which a party, either in terror or in triumph, could artfully rouse in the sympathies of men,—

* Strype's "Memorials," i. 344 and 218.

† A curious and a copious catalogue of these books, "though the books themselves are almost perished," may be seen in Strype's "Ecclesiastical Memorials," i. 165.

were felt and acknowledged by the monarch, who had himself staked the possession of his independent dominion on the energy and the eloquence of a single book,* to prepare his people for his meditated emancipation from the tiara; and, were any other proof wanting, we discover the terror of the Bishop of Durham, on the appearance of "a little book printed in English, issuing from Newcastle." His lordship writes in great trepidation to the minister Cromwell of this portentous little book, "like to do great harm among the people;" and advising that "letters be directed to all havens, towns, and other places, to forbid the book to be sold." All the ports to be closed against "a little book brought by some folks from Newcastle"! These incidents were certain demonstrations of the political influence of this new sovereignty of the printing-press.

In the simplicity of this early era of printing, the same bishop had all the copies of Tindal's Testament bought up at Antwerp, and burned. The English merchant employed on this occasion was a secret follower of the modern apostle, who, on his part, gladly furnished all the unsold copies which had hung on hand, anxious to correct a new edition which he was too poor to publish. When one of the Tindalites was promised his pardon if he would reveal the name of the person who had encouraged this new edition, he accepted the grace; and he assured the Lord Chancellor that the greatest encourager and supporter of his Antwerp friends had been the bishop himself, who, by buying up half the unsold impression, had enabled them to produce a second. This was the first lesson which taught that it is easier to burn authors than books.

There were two methods by which governments could

* The book, "De Verâ Differentiâ inter Regiam Potestatem et Ecclesiasticam," was called "the King's Book." It seems that the scholastic monarch gave some finishing strokes to what had probably passed through the hands of his most expert casuists.

countera e inconveniences of the press: the one, by clipping its s, and contracting the sphere of its action, which we shall se was early attempted; and the other, by adroitly turning its hemence into an opposite direction, making the press co l with the press, and by division weaken its dominion.

Henry the Eighth left the age he had himself created with its awakened ıe ceeding reigns, acting in direct opposition to each turbed the minds of the people; controversies ri books multiplied. The sphere of publication wid vertiginous era, printers greatly increased in the ı Edward the Sixth. But the craft did not flourish, w. raftmen had become numerous. We have the cor y authority of one of the most eminent printers, ctice of the art, and the cost of the materials, ha exceedingly chargeable, that the printers were dı ssity to throw themselves into the hands of "the stationers," or booksellers, for "small gains."* It is probable, that, at this period, the printers perceived that vending their books at the printing-office was not a mode which made them sufficiently public. This is the first indication that the printing, and the publication or the sale of books, were becoming separate trades.

In this history of the progress of the press in our country, the Stationers' Company now appears. This institution becomes an important branch of our investigation, for its influence over our literature; for its monopoly, opposed to the interests of other publishers; and, above all, for the practice of the government in converting this company into a ready instrument to restrain the freedom of the press.

Anterior to the invention of printing, there flourished a craft or trade who were denominated "stationers:" they were scribes and limners, and dealers in manuscript copies, and in

* "Archæologia," vol. xxv. 104.

parchment and paper, and other literary wares. It is believed by our antiquaries that they derived their denomination from their fixed locality, or *station in a street*, either by a shop or shed; and probably, when their former occupation had gone, still retained their dealings in literature, and turned to booksellers.* This denomination of "stationers," indicating their stationary residence, would also distinguish them from the itinerant vendors, who, in a more subordinate capacity at a later period, appear to have hawked about the town and the country pamphlets and other portable books.

In the reign of Philip and Mary, "the Stationers" were granted a charter of incorporation, and were invested with the most inquisitorial powers.

The favors of a tyrant are usually favors to individuals who profit at the cost of the community, and who themselves, overlooking every principle of justice, bind up their own selfish monopoly with the prosperity of criminal power. This we discover in the Company of Stationers, who were the willing dupes of that absolute power in the State which had created the corporation to do its watchful work, to carry on the war against books; and, by their passive obedience, they secured to themselves those privileges and licenses, and other monopolies, which they now amply enjoyed.

By this charter of the Stationers, it was specified that no one was to exercise the art of printing, unless he was one of the society; and the corporation, with their extraordinary but lawful authority, were to search as often as they pleased any house or chamber, &c., of any stamper or printer or binder or seller of any manner of books, which they deemed

* Pegge, in his "Anecdotes of the English Language," has somewhat crudely remarked that "the term 'stationers' was appropriated to *booksellers* in the year 1622;" but it was so long before. It is extraordinary that Mr. Todd, well read in our literary history, admits this imperfect disclosure of Pegge into the "Dictionary of the English Language." The terms "stationer" and "bookseller" were synonymous and in common use in the reign of Elizabeth; and may be found in Baret's "Alvearie," 1573.

obnoxiou[s] to the State, or their own interest! — to seize, burn, take aw[ay] or destroy, or convert to their own use.* The Stationers were, in fact, a Spanish inquisition for the cabinet of Philip and Mary, and whom the queen consulted on critical occasion[s]. For her majesty once sent for the warden to inquire whether they had seen or heard of a sort of books sent from Zurich. [The] inst[ruction] was never pushed to such extremities as [in the] procla[mation] of Philip and Mary, which Strype calls "a short but [severe] proclamation." Here we learn that "whoever find[s] any book of heresy, sedition, and treason, and does not forth[with] bring the same without showing or reading them to any [per]son, shall be *executed for a rebel*"! † It is evident [that the] grant of this incorporation was designed to make [the] ests of the company subservient to those of the [state], by the intermediate aid of the vigilant Stationer [the] inter would be controlled, since none were allowed to be printers who were not members of this corporation, and therefore amenable to its laws.

In the succeeding reign of Elizabeth, every thing changed except these state-proclamations in the war against books. The object had altered, but not the objection; for, though the books were different, the Elizabethan style is identical with the Marian. The same plenary powers of the Stationers were strengthened by an additional injunction, by which the government held the whole brotherhood with a closer grasp. The company were commissioned not only "to search into bookbinders' shops, as well as printing-offices, for unlawful and heretical books," but they were responsible for "any unruly printer who might endanger the church and state," and "who for covetousness regard not what they print, whereby ariseth great disorder by publication of unfruitful, vain, and infamous books and papers. None shall print any

* The Charter may be found in Herbert's "Typographical Antiquities," p. 1584.

† Strype's "Memorials," iii. part 2, p. 180.

manner of book, except the same be first *licensed by her majesty by express words in writing*, or by *six of her privy council*." *

When we recollect that the Stationers' Company under Mary were composed of the very same individuals who, two years after under Elizabeth, were busily ornamenting their shelves with all their late "seditious and heretical" books, and in removing out of sight all their late lawful and loyal ware, this transition of the feelings must have placed them in a position painful as it was ridiculous. But the true genius of a commercial body is of no party, save the predominant: pliant with their interests, a corporation, like a republic, in their zealous union can do that with public propriety, which, in the individuals it is composed of, would be incongruous and absurd.

The rage of government in this war against books was still sharper at a later period, provoked by the spread of the Mar-prelate pamphlets. A decree of the Star-chamber in 1586, among other orders, allows no printer to have an additional press without license; awards that there shall be no printing in any obscure part of a house; nor any printer out of the city of London, excepting at the two Universities; and till "the excessive multitude of printers be abated, diminished, or by death given over," no one shall resume that trade; and that the wardens of the Stationers' Company, with assistants, shall enter at all times warehouses, shops, &c., to seize all

* In the Lansdowne Manuscripts, 43, fol. 76, will be found "an act to restrain the licentious printing of unprofitable and hurtful books," 1580. After declaring that the art of printing is "a most happy and profitable invention," it is pointed at those "who pen or translate in the English tongue poesies, ditties, and songs; serving for a great part of them to none other end, what titles soever they bear, but to set up an art of making lascivious and ungodly love, to the intolerable corruption of life and manners; *and to the no small or sufferable waste of the treasure of this realm, which is thereby consumed in paper, a forren and chargeable commoditie.*" The first paper made in England was at Dartford, in 1588, by a German, who was knighted by the queen.

"letter-press es, and other printing instruments, to be defaced, melted, saw d in pieces, broken or battered at the smith's forge."* Amid all this book-phobia, a curious circumstance occurred. The learned could not prosecute their studies for the prohibition against many excellent works, written by those who were "addicted to the errors of Popery in foreign parts," and which also contained "matters against the state of this land." In this dile singular expedient was adopted. The archbishop a 'Ascanius de Renialme, a merchant bookseller, to bri his realm *some few copies* of every such sort of book this condition only, that they be first brought to m delivered only to such persons whom we deem mos en to have the reading of them." At this time it been an affair of considerable delicacy and diff tain a quotation, without first hastening to Lambeth ere to be questioned!

Printing and literature, u long reign of Elizabeth, in spite of all these Star-chamber edicts, amazingly increased: there seemed to be a swell from all the presses. Of 175 stationers, 140 had taken their freedom since this queen's accession. "So much had printing and learning come in request under the Reformation," observes our historical antiquary Strype. And such was the proud exultation of the great printer John Day, that, when he compared the darkness of the preceding period with what this publisher of Fox's mighty tomes of Martyrology deemed its purer enlightenment, he never printed his name without this pithy insinuation to the reader, "Arise; for it is DAY!" Books not only multiplied, but unquestionably it was at this period that first appeared the art of aiding these ephemeral productions of the press which supplied the wants of numerous readers. The rights of authors had hitherto derived a partial existence in privilege conceded by the royal patron; but it was now that

* This decree of the Star Chamber is printed in Herbert's "Typographical Antiquities," p. 1668.

they first gathered the fuller harvests of public favor. We shall shortly find a notice among the book-trade of what is termed "copyright."*

If the freedom of the press had been wholly wrested from the printers, it was not the sole grievance in the present state of our literature; for another custom had been assumed, which hung on the royal prerogative, — that of granting letters patent, or privileged licenses, under the broad seal, to individuals, to deal in a specific class of books, to the exclusion of every other publisher. Possibly the same secret motive which had contrived the absolute control of the press suggested the grants of these privileges. One enjoyed the privilege of printing Bibles; another, all law-books; another, grammars; another, "almanacs and prognostications;" and another, ballads, and books in prose and metre. These privileges assuredly increased the patronage of the great, and the dispensations of these favors were doubtless often abused. A singing-man had the license for printing music-books, which he extended to that of being the sole vendor of all ruled paper, on the plea, that, where there were ruled lines, musical notes might be pricked down; and a private gentleman, who was neither printer nor stationer, had the privilege of printing grammars and other things, which he farmed out for a considerable annual revenue, by which means these books were necessarily enhanced in price.

Such monopolies, which entered into the erroneous policy of that age, and the corrupt practices of patronage, long continued a source of discontent among the generality. This was now a period when the spirit of the times raised up men who would urge their independent rights. A struggle en-

* The privilege of a royal grant to the author was the only protection the author had for any profits of his work. Henry the Eighth granted Palsgrave his exclusive right for the printing of his book for seven years. Bishop Cooper obtained a privilege for the sale of his "Thesaurus" for twelve years; and a translator of Tacitus, for his version, during his natural life.

sued between the monopolists and the excluded, who clamored for the freedom of the trade. "Unruly printers" not only resisted when their own houses were besieged by the "searchers" of the stationers, but openly persisted in printing any "lawful books" they chose, in defiance of any royal privilege. A busy lawyer had been feed, who questioned this stretch of the prerogative. But the patriotism or the despair of these "unruly printers" led to the Clink or to Ludgate,—to imprisonment or to bankruptcy! The day had not yet arrived when civil freedom, though youthful and bold, with impunity could "kick against the pricks" of the prerogative. It is curious here to discover, that the aggrieved had even formed "a trade-union" for contributions to defend suits at law against the privileged; and when they were reminded that this mode only aggravated their troubles, and were asked by the sleek monopolists what they would gain if all were in common, which, as the privileged assumed, "would make havoc for one man to undo another,"—that is, those who were patentless would undo the patentees,—these Cains, in the bitterness of their hearts, fiercely replied to their more favored brothers, "We should make you beggars like ourselves!"*

Amid these clamors in the commonwealth of literature, the patentees became alarmed at the danger of having their patents revoked. The booksellers had become the more prosperous race; and some of these, combining with the Stationers' Company, opposed the privileged few. The advocates for the freedom of the trade advanced a proposition too tender to be handled by the Doctor of Civil Law, who was chosen for the arbitrator. At once these boldly impugned the prerogative royal itself in its exercise of granting privileges to printers, which they declared was against law: and however they might more successfully urge, that the better policy for the public was to admit of competition, and moderating of prices by

* "Archæologia," xxv. 112.

this freedom of publication, they add, "So, too, let every man print what 'lawful book' he choose, without any exceptions; even 'any book of which the copies thereof had been *bought of the authors* for their money.'" Here we find the first notice of "copyright," and the very inadequate notions yet entertained of its nature.

The plea of the patentees more skilfully addressed the Doctor of Civil Law by their assumption of the irrefragable rights of the royal prerogative. Their own privileges they maintained by the custom, as they showed that "all princes in Christendom had granted privileges for printing, sometimes for a term of years, or for life; that ancient books bore this inscription, *Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum;* that the queen's progenitors had exercised this right, and would any dare to lessen her majesty's prerogative?" All infringers had ever been punished. They further urged, that the good of the commonwealth required that printing should be in the hands of known men; being an art most dangerous and pernicious, if it were not straitened and restrained by politic order of the prince or magistrates. With truer arguments, they alleged that many useful books were now published unprofitable to the patentees, who had no other means of repaying themselves but by the sale of other books restricted to them by the protection of their privileges; and, finally, they declared that the public were incurring some danger that good books might not be printed at all if privileges were revoked, for *the first printer was at charge for the author's pains and other extraordinary cost;* but should any succeeding printer who had "*the copy gratis*" sell cheaper on better paper, and with notes and additions, it would put an end to the sale of the original edition: and they pithily conclude with the old wisdom, that "it is easier to amend than to invent." Here again we see specified the cost of "copyright" in the publication of a new book.

This attempt to open the freedom of the trade, which oc-

curred about 1583, the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Elizabeth, at length was not wholly unsuccessful: the monopolists conceded certain advantages;* and about twenty years subsequently, towards the end of that queen's reign, when the craft of authorship, adapting its wares to the fashion of the day, was practised by a whole race of popular writers, the booksellers became almost the sole publishers of books, employing the printers in their single capacity.†

In this war against books, the severe decree of the Star Chamber, 1586, was renewed with stricter prohibitions and more penal severity by a decree of the Star Chamber, under Charles the First, in 1637. Printing and printers were now placed under the supervision of the great officers of state; law-books were to be judiciously approved by the lord chief-justice; historical works were to be submitted to the secretaries of state; heraldry was left to the lord marshal; divinity, physic, philosophy, and poetry were to be sanctioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London. Two copies of every work were to be preserved in custody, to prevent any alterations being made in the published volumes, which would be detected on their comparison. Admirable preparatory and preventive measures! Here would ensue a general purgation of every atom in the human system, occasioning obstructions to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England and the state of government. The aim of all these decrees and proclamations was to abridge the number of printers, and to invigorate the absolute power conferred on the Stationers' Company, who had long delivered themselves, bound hand and foot, to the government, for the

* Nichols on the Stationers' Company. — *Lit. Anecdotes*, iii.

We have a list "of books yielded by the richer printers who had licenses from the queen;" but whether they were only copies bestowed in charity for the poorer "stationers," or given up by the monopolists, I do not understand. — HERBERT'S *Typographical Antiq.*, p. 1672.

† Herbert's "Typographical Antiq.," preface.

servile possession of their privileges. Printers were still limited to twenty, as in the reign of Elizabeth; and only four letter-founders allowed. Every printed book on paper was to bear the impress of the printer's name, on pain of corporal punishment. They held books in such terror, that even those which had formerly been licensed were not allowed to be reprinted, without being "reviewed," as they express it, and rewatched by placing on guard this double sentinel. There are some extraordinary clauses which betray the feeble infancy of the rude policy of that day. The decree tells us, that "printing in corners without license had been usually done by journeymen out of work;" and, to provide against this source of inquietude, it compels the printers to employ all journeymen out of employ, "though the printer should be able to do his own work without these journeymen:" and, in the same spirit of compulsion, it ordains that all such unemployed shall be obliged to work whenever called on.* Masters and men were equally amenable to fines impossible to be paid, and penal pains almost too horrible to endure, short of life, but not of ruin: a dark, a merciless, a mocking tribunal, where the judges sate the prosecutors, and whose unwritten laws hung on their own lips; and where to discharge any accused person as innocent was looked on as a reproach of their negligence, or an imputation of their sagacity.

Did the severity of these decrees produce the evils they encountered? or was it the existence of the evils which provoked the issue of these edicts? Did the terrific executions eradicate the political mischief? There was no free press in Elizabeth's reign, and yet libels abounded! The government compulsively contracted the press by their twenty stationary printers; and, behold! movable presses, whose ubiquity was astonishing as their ceaseless working. An invisible

* This remarkable "Decree of Starr-chamber concerning Printing" was in the possession of Thomas Hollis, and is printed in the Appendix to his curious Memoirs, p. 641.

printer eriously scattered his publications here and there du the contest of the Mar-prelate faction with the bishops; the libels of the Jesuit Parsons, and others of the Roma arty, were as rife against her majesty and her minister. ıe same occurred when the Star Chamber was guided b genius of Laud: the altar was raised, and the sacerdotal k ife struck! but the groans of the immolated victims were a shout clear demonstration that nothing is r ıen porary suppressions which power may e: ook circulates till it is hoarded; the a d, mutilated, or hanged, obtains a popularity, own genius afforded him no chance to re.

The secret n of angling edicts was to hold the printers in o the government, whatever that govern r each separate government, though acting o principles, manifested a remarkable uniformity in their proceedings with the press. In the arbitrary days of Charles the Second, an extraordinary, if not an audacious, attempt was made to wrest the art of printing out of the hands of its professors, and to place the press wholly at the disposal of the sovereign. This usurping doctrine was founded on a startling plea. As our monarchs had granted privileges to the earliest printers, and, from the introduction of the art into England, had never ceased their patronage or their control, it was inferred that our kings had never yielded *the royal prerogative of printing*, any more than they had that of *coining*. The "mystery" of printing, in the style of the lawyers, was "a flower of the crown"! — the exercise of the prerogative; and therefore every printer in England must be a sworn servant of the crown. At such a period, we are not surprised to find an express treatise put forth to demonstrate to his sacred majesty, that "printing belonged to him, in his public and private capacity, as supreme *magistrate* and as *proprietor:*" in reality, there was to be

but one printer for all England, and that printer the king! This was giving at once the most elevated and the most degraded notions of "the divine art," which this servile assumer describes can "not only bereave the king of his good name, but of the very hearts of his people." *

We observe the lamentations of these advocates of arbitrary power over the freedom of the press, or, as such maintained, the confusion produced "by the exorbitant and unlawful exercise of printing in modern times." They appeal to the miseries and calamities not only recently witnessed in our own country, but in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Wherever they track a footstep of the liberty of the press, they pause to discover its accompanying calamity. One of these writers, to convey an adequate notion of the spread and political influence of the press, has thrown out a very excitable remark: "Had this art been known in the time of the grand profession of the Donatist and Arian heresy, it would have drowned the world in a second deluge of blood and confusion, to its utter destruction long time since," — a stroke of church history which might suggest a whole volume!

The interests of the printers had coincided with the designs of government in limiting the number of presses; for the policy of their narrow confederacy was, the fewer printers, the more printing! But the interests of the booksellers were quite opposite: they were for encouraging supernumerary printers, and overstocking the printing-offices with journeymen; and by this means they succeeded in bringing the printers down to their price or their purpose; and it is insinuated, on the Machiavelian principle, that, the number being

* "The Original and Growth of Printing, collected out of History and the Records of this Kingdom," &c., by Richard Atkyns, Esq., 1664. In this rare tract first appeared a narrative of the introduction of printing into Oxford, *before Caxton*, by the printer Francis Corsellis, to prove that printing was brought into England by Henry the Sixth.

greater t[illegible] could live honestly by the trade, one-half must be knaves [illegible]r starve. And it seems that "knaves" were in greater [illegible]nisition by the publishers of "the unlawful," or, as these [illegible]ere afterwards called on the establishment of a licenser [illegible] the press, "the unlicensed books," who revelled in their seductive profits.*

Among the effusions [illegible]ical literature of the egregious Sir ROGER L'ESTR[illegible]rsed in the arcana of the publishing system of his [illegible]cover a project which terminated in renewin[illegible]f the licenser of books in his own person; the [illegible]referment the Restoration brought the clamorous [illegible] Our literary knight addressed Charles the Sec[illegible]press on his majesty the urgency of an immedia[illegible]n of the press; "this great business of the press [illegible]ngrossed by Oliver's creatures, and the *honest* p[illegible]; impoverished by the late times."

This project to regulate the press by L'Estrange chiefly turned on the dexterous management of the printers. He calculated, for four thousand pounds, to buy up the presses of the poor printers, who were willing to be reimbursed, and look to better trades. The bolder project was to emancipate the printers from the tyranny of the booksellers, by which means they would no longer be necessitated to print whatever their masters ordered. The printers at this moment had menaced to separate themselves from the stationers with a view of their own.

The printers had been gradually deprived of any shares in new publications; they had been thrown out of all copy-

* For "unlicensed books" the printer charged twenty-five per cent extra; but the booksellers sold them for double and treble the cost of other books.

"Considerations and Proposals in order to the Regulation of the Press, together with diverse instances of Treasonous and Seditious Pamphlets, proving the necessity thereof," 1663.

right, and probably had grown somewhat jealous of their prosperous masters: the printers complained that they were nothing else than slaves to the booksellers. They called for an independent company of "the mystery;" and, reverting to the custom of the early printers, they desired to have their own presses under their own management, and to print only the copies of which they themselves were the proprietors.

The future licenser of the press, who was throwing his net to haul in all these fish at a cast, took advantage of this project, which at once was levelled at the freedom of the trade and the freedom of the press. Printers solely working on their own copies would indeed check "the ungovernable ambition of the booksellers" by diminishing their copyrights; while those "unhappy printers" would be relieved, who, at present, have no other work than what "the great dealers in treasonous or seditious books" furnished them. All these were but the ostensible motives; for the real object designed was, that the printers should become the creatures of the patronage of government; and, by the diminution of their number, the contracted circle would be the more easily managed.

Such were the systematic struggles of our governments in the revival of the severe acts for the regulation of printing at various periods. It was long assumed that printing was not a free trade, but always to remain under regulation.

When Dr. Johnson, laboring under the pressure of his ancient notions, contending with the clear perception of his sceptical sagacity, once stood awed before the sublime effusion of Milton's "Areopagitica," he hazarded this opinion; for, by balancing his notions, it cannot be accepted as a decision: "The danger of such unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of government, which human understanding seems unable to solve."

And, whatever either the advocates or the adversaries of the freedom of the press may allege, this problem in the

science government remains as insoluble at this day as at any former period, — a truth demonstrated by a circumstance which has repeatedly occurred in our own political history. The noble treatise of Milton for a free press had not the slightest influence on that very parliament whose members had long suffered from its oppression. The Catholics clamored for a free press under Charles the Second; but the same act operated under James the Second, from the [illegible] the Protestant party, the liberty of [illegible] demned as exorbitant and intolerable [illegible] ree press thus become its adversaries [illegible] lves form the ruling power. Orators for [illegible] ss suddenly send forth outcries against [illegible] se, whoever the party may be, who [illegible] government, it always happens that [illegible] may be their principles, must submit to the risk [illegible] emed seditious libellers.

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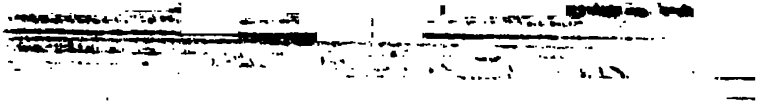
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